**Cardiff Metropolitan University**

**Cardiff School of Health Sciences**

**MSc Musculoskeletal Studies (Lower Limb)**

**Programme Information (April 2012)**

1. **Introduction**

The MSc Musculoskeletal Studies (Lower Limb) was validated in 2006 and the first student intake was in September 2007. In the academic session 2010-2011 the award was presented for review, and some important changes were implemented to broaden the appeal of the award. These changes principally involved the inclusion of 2 work based learning modules, and modules on Sports *Biomechanics & Injury Management*, *Injection Therapy* and *Pharmacology*. **Any module can be accessed in isolation**, and **several are available as short courses**. This document outlines key details of the programme that will be of interest to prospective students, whether their requirement is for an individual module, a postgraduate certificate, a postgraduate diploma, or a full MSc.

1. **Background and rationale**

The programme is aimed at healthcare professionals involved in the management of lower limb musculoskeletal disorders across a range of patients. Typically this will be podiatrists, but physiotherapists, orthotists and other allied health professionals may also be interested in the award and are most welcome. All healthcare professionals are charged with increasing the extent to which evidence informs their practice, and as such the award focuses on the principles of evidence based practice, developing in students a critical, reflective, approach to all aspects of practice. This ranges from examination and diagnosis, aetiology and pathology to management strategies. Consistent with expanding roles, opportunities to obtain certification in injection therapy and pharmacology are provided. In line with the programme aim, modules on critical appraisal and research methods are included in years 1 and 2 respectively, and these feed into the third year in which students prepare a research proposal and then undertake a research study related to the field of lower limb musculoskeletal practice, so that they are not only using, but contributing to, the evidence base.

1. **Setting**

The programme is offered by Cardiff School of Health Sciences (CSHS), which is one of five schools in Cardiff Metropolitan University. The host centre is the Wales Centre for Podiatric Studies (WCPS). CSHS is situated at the Llandaff campus only a few miles from the city centre, and there are a range of facilities on campus. Within the WCPS there is a multi-chair podiatry clinic, clinically-oriented gait analysis laboratory awaiting new E-Med platform and F-Scan in-shoe plantar pressure measurement systems to join the existing Quintic digital gait analysis system. The centre also has an orthosis manufacturing laboratory. On campus there is also a physiology laboratory which is used for analysing the metabolic costs of specific gait patterns and interventions. Cardiff Met’s Cyncoed campus hosts the Cardiff School of Sport (CSS), which boasts extensive gait analysis facilities including the CODA motion and VICON systems, Electromyography, Kistler and Bertec force platforms, and diagnostic ultrasound facilities. CSS is also host to the Centre for Sports and Exercise medicine, which two members of the programme team are involved with.

In addition to programme-specific teaching resources, the Llandaff campus offers a learning centre and library, a student centre with restaurants and cafes, and a gym. Cardiff is the capital city of Wales, with a population approaching 400 000. As such all the associated facilities are available: rail, road and air links, plenty of accommodation options, and a vibrant city centre and bayfront development with shops, restaurants and bars.

1. **Award structure and content**

Consistent with the requirements of a Masters degree, the full award requires the completion of 180 credits which is broken down into 60 per year. Successful completion of year 1 brings eligibility to exit with a Postgraduate Certificate, completing an additional 60 credits in year 2 brings eligibility to exit with a total of 120 credits and a Postgraduate Diploma, and undertaking the research module in year 3 secures the MSc. The model is based on a notional student effort value of 100 hours per 10 credits. Approximately 10 of those hours take the form of face to face contact with the remainder being made up various forms of independent learning supported by e-discussion forums via Blackboard (Cardiff Met’s virtual learning environment) and Adobe Connect Pro (permitting virtual contact sessions). This pattern applies particularly to traditionally taught modules, with the notable exception being the Professional Practice Work Based Learning modules – in *Examination and Diagnosis* in year 1 and *Musculoskeletal Therapeutics* in year 2. These consist of keynote lectures and structured supervision to enable the student to firstly devise appropriate learning outcomes related to their own practice, and secondly to plan and construct a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate how those learning outcomes have been met.

Credits are accumulated via a series of 10 and 20 credit modules delivered in attendance blocks of 3-4 days duration, which take place throughout the year. Students will be required to attend CMU 3 times in year 1 and 4 times in year 2. Year 2 options will dictate the attendance pattern, however, with *Sports Biomechanics and Injury Management* offered during the academic year and *Pharmacology* and *Injection Therapy* being offered in April and July respectively. The programme modules, with their credit value, are included below. Please note that more than 180 credits of modules are included, and the flexibility this affords is explained\*.

* Critical appraisal (10 credits)
* Professional Practice Work Based Learning: Examination and Diagnosis (20)
* The Pathological Basis of Musculoskeletal Disorders (20)
* Gait analysis (10)
* Biomechanics, Sport and Injury\* (10 and 20 credit options)
* Professional Practice Work Based Learning: Musculoskeletal Therapeutics (20 )
* Injection therapy\* (10)
* Pharmacology for Podiatrists\* (10)
* Applied Research Methods and Design (20)
* Research project (60)

\*It is recognised that not all students will want to undertake the *Injection Therapy* and / or *Pharmacology modules*. The alternative modules *Biomechanics, Sports and Injury* (10 credits) / *Biomechanics, Sport and Injury Management* (20 credits) can be selected to satisfy student preference with options available to undertake:

* Biomechanics, Sport & Injury (10 credits) and Injection Therapy (10 credits);
* Biomechanics, Sports & Injury (10 credits) and Pharmacology (10 credits);
* Biomechanics, Sport & Injury (20 credits);
* Injection Therapy (10 credits) and Pharmacology for Podiatrists (10 credits).

Students may of course undertake more credits than is necessary for the MSc – on a *Continuing Professional Development* basis - should they wish to.

**MSc Musculoskeletal Studies (Lower Limb)**

**Module Delivery Paatern**

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| **Title** | **Credit value** | **Attendance block** | **Study period** |
| **Year 1** | | | |
| Critical appraisal | 10 | September (3 days) | Sept. - Dec. |
| PPWBL Exam. & diagnosis | 20 | September\* (2 days) | Sept. – April |
| PPWBL Exam. & diagnosis cont. | 20 | January\* (2 days) | Sept. - April |
| Gait Analysis | 10 | January (3 days) | Jan. – June |
| Pathology | 20 | March / April\* (2 days) | April-June |
| **Year 2** | | | |
| PPWBL MSK Therapies | 20 | September (2 days) | Sept. – May |
| Biomech, Sport & Injury I | 10 | October (3 days) | Oct. – Feb. |
| Applied Research Methods & Design | 20 | October (2 days) | Oct. - April |
| Biomech, Sport & Injury II | 10 | February (2 days) | Feb. - April |
| Applied Research Methods & Design | 20 | February (2 days) | Oct. - April |
| Pharmacology for Podiatrists | 10 | April (5 days) | April – June |
| Injection Therapy | 10 | July (2 days) | July - September |
| **Year 3** | | | |
| Research Project | 60 | Sept. (2 days)  December (1 day) | Sept. – May |

Modules marked\* are delivered over two consecutive contact blocks.

Please note that *Sports Biomechanics and Injury (Management)* is delivered during the academic year, with Pharmacology and Injection Therapy delivered in May and July respectively.

1. **Assessment**

The award is assessed using a variety of techniques, based on the premise that this is necessary to permit the development of a range of skills that will be important firstly in demonstrating the fulfilment of learning outcomes, and secondly in encouraging students to disseminate their work via appropriate mechanisms. Techniques such as learning diaries and case presentations which focus on clinical cases, are inherently reflective, and are central to the award. Poster and podium presentations are used to encourage participation at conferences, and the more traditional essay format figures less prominently. All techniques are encountered during the programme and the emphasis is on reflective learning diaries and case studies which are intended to show clear application of theory in practice.

1. **Entry Requirements**

The award is aimed at healthcare professionals involved in the clinical management of lower limb musculoskeletal disorders in a range of patient groups, and specifically those with autonomous decision making abilities. The entry criteria are:

* + Health Professions Council Registration, or an equivalent for professions falling outside the regulation of the HPC, or international equivalent.
  + A minimum of 1 years post-registration experience.
  + Demonstrable engagement with musculoskeletal-oriented continuing professional development in the recent past.
  + A suitable musculoskeletal caseload to serve as a resource from which to draw cases for learning diaries, case studies, and presentations.
  + At least one, and where appropriate two (if required to cover both issues), references confirming:
    - A suitable musculoskeletal caseload (e.g. from NHS Manager)
    - Suitability and capability to undertake the award (e.g. Academic)

The entry process involves completion of an application form available via the Cardiff Met website (<http://www3.uwic.ac.uk/English/StudyAtUWIC/HowToApply/Pages/ptpg.aspx>). This should be completed and sent together with appropriate reference(s) and copies of all academic and professional qualifications to the Cardiff Met admissions unit from where it is passed on to the programme director. A decision will normally be made within 3 weeks, and if required an interview will be arranged.

Further information on particular aspects of the programme is available from the programme director, Dr. Ian Mathieson available at [imathieson@cardiffmet.ac.uk](mailto:imathieson@cardiffmet.ac.uk) or on 029 2041 6864.