

Postgraduate Programme Specification

MSc in Advanced Physiotherapy Practice

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate where full advantage is taken of all learning opportunities offered. Further details on the learning, teaching and assessment approach for the programme and modules can be accessed on the University website and Virtual Learning Environment, GCU Learn. All programmes of the University are subject to the University's [Quality Assurance](#) processes.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION			
Programme Title	Master of Science in Advanced Physiotherapy Practice		
Final Award	Master of Science in Advanced Physiotherapy Practice		
Awarding Body	Glasgow Caledonian University		
School	School of Health and Life Sciences		
Department	Department of Allied Health Professions		
Mode of Study	Full-time Part-time		
Location of Delivery	Glasgow Campus		
UCAS Code	NA		
Accreditations (PSRB)	NA		
Period of Approval	From:	November 2025	To: October 2030

2. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME
The MSc Advanced Physiotherapy Practice programme is a cornerstone of the postgraduate portfolio within the School of Health and Life Sciences (SHLS) at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), Glasgow Campus. Designed for qualified physiotherapists, the programme supports the advancement of clinical expertise through a structured, dynamic, and evidence-informed master's-level curriculum. As part of the Masters Suite of Postgraduate Programmes, the MSc Advanced Physiotherapy Practice shares a common philosophy and set of aims with the suite, while maintaining a distinct focus on physiotherapy-specific professional development. In today's complex and rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, professionals across public, private, and voluntary sectors must navigate multifaceted challenges. This programme fosters critical thinking, reflective dialogue, and innovative approaches to physiotherapy practice, all grounded in clinical reasoning and a robust scientific evidence base. Graduates are empowered to lead change and improve outcomes within their workplaces and communities. Alignment with Professional Standards The programme is closely aligned with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) definition of advanced practice, which emphasises the integration of high-level skills and knowledge into clinical roles. Advanced Practice Physiotherapists (APPs) are expected to: • Make complex clinical decisions across diverse patient presentations

- Deliver both preventative and interventional care
- Demonstrate autonomy, sound clinical judgment, and specialised expertise

GCU's programme philosophy mirrors the CSP's strategic vision, placing strong emphasis on patient-centred care, professional leadership, and the advancement of physiotherapy within multidisciplinary teams. The curriculum is built around the four pillars of advanced practice (CSP, Maddigan et al.): Clinical Practice, Leadership, Education and Research.

This flexible and integrative approach reflects the multifactorial nature of modern clinical environments, which often transcend traditional specialty boundaries. The model below (Figure 1) outlines the programme's core domains and associated outcomes:

Knowledge & Research	Practice	Education	Service
• Identifies research questions with stakeholders • Develops research programmes • Becomes a critical thinker • Supports research use	• Promotes and supports advanced practice • Develops/sustains leadership • Enhances collaborative and evidence-based practice	• Becomes a reflective lifelong learner • Supports learning in others (e.g. patients, colleagues) • Values interprofessional learning	• Recognises ethical dimensions • Contributes to community wellbeing • Participates as a global citizen

Figure 1 Core Domains

Programme Aim

The overarching aim is to deliver a high-quality educational experience that prepares registered physiotherapists to meet the political, organisational, and clinical demands of advanced practice. The programme develops critical, evaluative, and creative practitioners who can respond to change and contribute meaningfully across the NHS, private sector, and emerging areas of practice—both nationally and internationally.

This programme strives to provide high quality educational experiences which support the development of registered Physiotherapists who can meet the contemporary political, organisational and clinical practice demands of advanced practice. This includes developing critical, evaluative, creative and skilled physiotherapy practitioners who respond positively to professional, political and social change and can work as effective members of the health and social care teams in the National Health Service (NHS), private practice, or within evolving and innovative areas of practice.

This programme recognises that Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioners must demonstrate high-level decision-making and problem-solving skills in complex clinical environments. To support this, the delivery of the MSc Advanced Physiotherapy Practice is grounded in advanced scholarship, ensuring safe, effective, and evidence-based practice.

Building on students' existing knowledge and clinical experience, the programme offers a range of dynamic uni- and inter-professional learning opportunities designed to extend their capabilities and prepare them for leadership in advanced practice.

To achieve the overarching programme aim, the following educational aims have been established:

1. **Develop Advanced Skills**

Cultivate critical thinking, evidence-based practice, and research capabilities to enable students to drive change informed by current best practice.

2. **Innovative Learning Opportunities**

Provide relevant and engaging teaching experiences grounded in applied research and academic scholarship.

3. **Service User and Carer Perspectives**

Promote understanding of the lived experiences of service users and carers, and support the integration of these perspectives into policy, practice, and education.

4. **Lifelong Learning**

Encourage independent, reflective, and continuous learning in alignment with the goals of the University, Government, and Professional Bodies.

5. **Global Health Perspectives**

Expose students to international views on health and social care, enabling them to act as global citizens influencing local, national, and global agendas.

6. **Professional Leadership**

Equip students with the knowledge and confidence to lead and contribute to the development and modernisation of health and social care systems.

7. **Advanced Theoretical Knowledge**

Provide in-depth theoretical understanding linked to defined areas of physiotherapy practice.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

A: Knowledge and understanding;

- A1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant theoretical perspectives and their application in advancing physiotherapy practice.
- A2. Identify and critically analyse issues, which underpin the effective development and delivery of advancing physiotherapy practice within healthcare services.
- A3. Demonstrate a critical awareness of current issues in a physiotherapy and advancing practice
- A4. Develop systematic, critical knowledge and awareness of current social and political issues at the forefront of advancing physiotherapy practice, which support and optimising care outcomes.

- A5. Evaluate theoretical knowledge of bio-psychosocial concepts and their application to promoting health and well-being to inform advancing physiotherapy practice
- A6. Use advanced knowledge, practice skills and techniques, which holistically assess and promote the care needs of individuals within the population.

B: Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding;

- B1. Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge, clinical skills, understanding and/ or practices to advancing physiotherapy practice.
- B2. Plan and execute a significant project of research, investigation or development.
- B3. Explore and evaluate strategies which are responsive to addressing the health needs of individuals and that seek to empower and enable individuals to optimise opportunities to retain their independence.
- B4. Reflect on, and critically appraise in the context of advancing physiotherapy practice, the actions of self and others in relation to the provision of safe and effective healthcare delivery
- B5. Demonstrate evaluation of a wide range of specialised theories, principles and concepts that influence the provision of clinical care and management and consider their application for advancing physiotherapy practice.
- B6. Evaluate the provision of care and its delivery by synthesising information and data from a wide range of health and social care source using a range of standard and specialised research or equivalent instruments and techniques of enquiry.

C: Generic cognitive skills;

- C1. Demonstrate the ability to critically analyse, evaluate and synthesise issues related to physiotherapy practice and other specialist knowledge associated with research and advancing physiotherapy practice
- C2. Critically appraise and synthesis information to develop a broad and integrated understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries associated with concepts linked to advancing physiotherapy practice.
- C3. Critically review, reflect and consolidate physiotherapy knowledge to extend thinking to maintain currency of the evidence base by searching for and reviewing research-based literature, which has relevance for advancing physiotherapy practice.
- C4. Engage in problem solving to identify, critique, clarify, explain and offer resolution to problems associated with complex care delivery within the context of advancing physiotherapy practice.
- C5. Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues in advancing physiotherapy practice
- C6. Develop original and creative responses to problems and issues in advancing physiotherapy practice.

D: Communication, numeracy and ICT skills

- D1. Use a range of specialised skills to communicate with a range of stakeholders and audiences with differing levels of knowledge and expertise.
- D2. Appraise the range of approaches to effectively communicate with, peers, senior colleagues, discipline specialists and professionals within the health and social care arena.
- D3. Use a wide range of software to support and enhance work at this level and specify new software or refinements/improvements to existing software to increase effectiveness.
- D4. Develop advanced study, numeracy, ICT, artificial intelligence and information literacy skills to underpin effective advanced physiotherapy practice
- D5. Develop skills of critical reflection, self-assessment and peer review to enhance communication with other professionals

- D6. Develop self-marketing/presentation skills that demonstrate initiative and creativity in advanced physiotherapy practice

E: Autonomy, accountability and working with others.

- E1. Reflect on professional accountably, autonomous practice and high-level decision making to underpin advancing physiotherapy practice
- E2. Demonstrate independence, initiative and personal responsibility for own work in managing time and prioritising workload.
- E3. Explore and evaluate ways in which professionalism and participation in leadership activities contribute to care delivery, critically reflecting on own and others roles and responsibilities.
- E4. Explore the complexity of care delivery in which the legal, ethical and professional dimensions emerge and, in accordance with codes of practice and make informed judgements, seeking guidance where appropriate.
- E5. Explore professional engagement in order to work effectively with others as part of collaborative cross-boundary, interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary and multi-agency partnerships.
- E6. Demonstrate self-direction in problem solving, dealing with complex and unpredictable situations, abstract issues and acting autonomously in planning and implementing holistic care at a professional level.

4. LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The programme provides a variety of learning and teaching methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the learning and teaching methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Practical classes
- Simulation experiences
- Groupwork
- Flipped classroom approaches
- Online learning

The above approaches may be delivered either in person or online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

5. ASSESSMENT METHODS

The programme provides a variety of formative and summative assessment methods. Programme and Module specific guidance will provide detail of the assessment methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the assessment methods may include the following:

- Written coursework (essays, reports, case studies, dissertation, literature review)
- Oral coursework (presentations, structured conversations)
- Practical Assessment (Placement, VIVA, Laboratory work)

- Group work
- Blogs and Wikis
- Portfolio Presentations
- Formal Examinations and Class Tests

The above assessments may be delivered either in person and online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

6. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Specific entry requirements for this programme can be found on the prospectus and study pages on the GCU website at this location: www.gcu.ac.uk/study. The specific English language requirement for MSc Advanced physiotherapy programme at the Glasgow Caledonian University for International and EU students are required to provide evidence of an IELTS score of Level 6.5 with no single element below 6.0 or English language equivalent.

The Course webpage specific to this Programme is: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/courses/msc-advanced-physiotherapy-practice-glasgow>

All students entering the programme are required to adhere to the [GCU Code of Student Conduct](#).

7. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE FINAL EXIT AWARDS¹

The following modules are delivered as part of this programme:

Module Code	Module Title	Core or Optional	SCQF Level	Credit Size	Coursework %	Examination %	Practical %
Mandatory Modules							
MMB724491	Advanced Research Methods	Core	11	30	70%	30%	0
MMB130771	Advancing Professional Practice	Core	11	30	100	0	0
MMB730962	Dissertation	Core	11	60	100	0	0
Physiotherapy Based Optional Modules							
MMB726826	Advanced Leadership for Health and Social Care Practitioners	Optional	11	30	100	0	0
MMB130312	Advanced Musculoskeletal Practice	Optional	11	30	0	100	0
MMB130323	Advancing Practice in Neurological Rehabilitation	Optional	11	30	0	100	0
MMB130320	Human Movement and Musculoskeletal Analysis	Optional	11	30	100	0	0
MMB723192 / MMB723193	Work-Based Advanced Skills & Innovative Practices	Optional	11	15	100	0	0
MMB723194 / MMB723195	Work-Based Advanced Skills & Innovative Practices	Optional	11	30	100	0	0
Generic Optional Modules							
MMB826611	Clinical Investigations	Optional	11	30	0	100	0
MMB126657	Advanced Assessment and Management of Illness and Injury	Optional	11	30	50	50	0
MMB726148	Prescribing for Healthcare Professionals**	Optional	11	30	50	50	0
MMB725021	Social Action Approaches in Public Health	Optional	11	15	100	0	0
MMB725785	Applied Pathophysiology for Advancing Professional Practice	Optional	11	15	0	100	0
MMB725030	Infection Prevention and Control in a Global Context	Optional	11	15	100	0	0
MMB722903	Supporting Anticipatory Care for Long Term Conditions Management	Optional	11	15	100	0	0
MMC126416	Diabetes Care- A Multi-professional Approach	Optional	11	20	50	50	0
MMB730171	Pathophysiology and Chronic Complications of Diabetes	Optional	11	15	50	50	0

¹ Periodically, programmes and modules may be subject to change or cancellation. Further information on this can be found on the GCU website here:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures>

MMB312643	The Lower Limb and Foot in Diabetes- Evaluation of Risk	Optional	11	15	0	100	0
MMC122348	Nutrition and Lifestyle Management of Diabetes	Optional	11	15	30	70	0
MMC924988	Topics in Diabetes Care and Management	Optional	11	15	100	0	0

** requires clinical supervision and must have an employment within UK.

Students undertaking the programme on a full-time basis commencing in September of each year will undertake the modules in the order presented above. This may be subject to variation and availability for students commencing the programme at other times of year (e.g. January) and/or undertaking the programme on a part-time or distance learning mode of delivery.

The following final and early Exit Awards are available from this programme²:

MSc Advanced Physiotherapy Practice – 180 credits

180 credits gained from agreed modules within the masters' suite of postgraduate programmes, MUST include Advanced Research Methods (30 credits), Advancing Professional Practice (30 credits), and Dissertation (60 credits)

PgD Advanced Physiotherapy Practice – 120 credits

120 credits gained from agreed modules within the masters' suite of postgraduate programmes, MUST include Advanced Research Methods (30 credits), Advancing Professional Practice (30 credits),

PgC Advanced Physiotherapy Practice – 60 credits

60 credits from agreed modules within the masters' suite of postgraduate programmes MUST include Advancing Professional Practice (30 credits)

8. ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Students should expect to complete their programme of study under the GCU Assessment Regulations that were in place at the commencement of their studies on that programme, unless proposed changes to University Regulations are advantageous to students. These can be found at:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/services-and-facilities/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulations-and-policies>

In addition to the GCU Assessment Regulations noted above, this programme is subject to Programme Specific Regulations in line with the following approved Exceptions:

² Please refer to the [GCU Qualifications Framework](#) for the minimum credits required for each level of award and the Programme Handbook for requirements on any specified or prohibited module combinations for each award.

Exceptions Case 122,177,251

(i) MMB726148 Prescribing for Healthcare Practitioners

Minimum threshold pass marks for each item of assessment

(ii) MMB826611 Clinical Investigations

Minimum threshold pass marks for each item of assessment

(iii) *Entry requirement for programme in terms of English language: IELTS score: Academic IELTS 6.5 with no single element below 6.0; or equivalent*

VERSION CONTROL (to be completed in line with AQPP processes)

Any changes to the PSP must be recorded below by the programme team to ensure accuracy of the programme of study being offered.

<i>Version Number</i>	<i>Changes/Updates</i>	<i>Date Changes/Updates made</i>	<i>Date Effective From</i>
1.0	Programme approval: • Dissertation module: Assessment Structure changed • ARM assessment structure changed	Nov 2025	Sept 2026