

# PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
2	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
3	<b>Final Award</b>	Master of Science Postgraduate Diploma Postgraduate Certificate
4	<b>Programme Title</b>	See item 5
5	<b>Programme Code</b>	<p>Master of Science Oncology (Sept) <b>5397P</b>  Master of Science Oncology (Jan) – <b>5398P</b>  Master of Science Palliative Care (Sept) <b>5399P</b>  Master of Science Palliative Care (Jan) <b>5400P</b>  Master of Science Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry (Sept) <b>5401P</b>  Master of Science Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry (Jan) <b>5402P</b>  Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology (Sept) <b>3506P</b>  Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology (Jan) <b>3507P</b>  Postgraduate Diploma in Palliative Care (Sept) <b>3508P</b>  Postgraduate Diploma in Palliative Care (Jan) <b>3509P</b>  Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry (Sept) <b>3511P</b>  Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry (Jan) <b>3512P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology (Sept) <b>3159P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology (Jan) <b>3160P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Palliative Care (Sept) <b>3161P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Palliative Care (Jan) <b>3162P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry (Sept) <b>3163P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry (Jan) <b>3164P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Cancer Studies (Sept) <b>3165P</b>  Postgraduate Certificate in Cancer Studies (Jan) <b>3166P</b>  CPD in Oncology and Palliative Care <b>6041P</b></p> <p><b>All programmes have been withdrawn and are only available to existing students completing their programme.</b></p>
6	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	N/A
7	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	N/A
8	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Masters (7)

<b>9</b>	<b>Last updated</b>	May 2025
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<b>10</b>	<b>Programme Aims</b>
<p>These programmes aim to facilitate the development of practitioners within different fields of oncology, palliative care and the pharmaceutical industry to equip them with the skills to deliver excellent clinical care, effective leadership and to develop high quality products and services. Our educational offerings seek to cultivate inter-professional and inter-disciplinary education and working. The programme also aims to introduce the basis of research in oncology /palliative care/ oncology as applied to the pharmaceutical industry and to prepare participants for further active research within their own discipline.</p>	

<b>11</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
<p>The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.</p>	
<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>	
<p>On completing the programme students will be able to:</p> <p>A1 Apply knowledge of diagnostic and therapeutic interventions in cancer and advanced, incurable disease to the management of disease and relief of symptoms associated with such disease and its treatment.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A1.1 Critically appraise the mechanisms of action, roles, impacts and limitations of current and novel cancer treatment modalities (Specific to Pharma and Oncology Strands)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A.1.2 Assess the risk to benefit profile of therapeutic agents, delivery methods and problems associated with routine cancer treatments (Specific to Pharma and Oncology Strands)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A1.3 Critique theory, research and clinical practice in relation to the aetiology, diagnosis and management of physical and psychological symptoms presenting in cancer, advanced disease and bereavement (Specific to Oncology and Palliative Care Strands)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A1.4 Collaborate effectively with a range of professionals for the benefit of patients, caregivers, society and the wider healthcare economy (Specific to Oncology and Palliative Care Strands)</p> <p>A2 Appraise current developments in cancer/palliative care/oncology pharmaceuticals.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A2.1 Apply pharmacological factors, knowledge of cancer treatment and health economics to the design and introduction to market of cancer pharmacy products and technologies. (Specific to Pharma Strand)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A2.2 Critically discuss the physical, psychological, social and emotional impact of advanced and incurable disease on patients, caregivers and society (Specific to Palliative Care Strand)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A2.3 Appraise the pathophysiology and impact of the secondary effects of cancer and cancer treatment (Specific to Oncology Strand)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A2.4 Debate the causes of avoidable suffering at the end of life (Specific to Palliative Care Strand)</p> <p>A3 Apply knowledge of the theoretical basis of clinical research to the student's area of specialist practice (Specific to MSc level)</p>	
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>	
<p>A1 and A2 are addressed via online directed module readings, quizzes and tutorials. Formative MCQs and discussion activities allow students to consolidate their knowledge. A1.4 involves group tasks and the creation of shared artefacts of learning (wikis, presentations)</p> <p>A3 is addressed via case studies of relevant research, and formative feedback which allows the student to develop their research proposal and dissertation project.</p>	

<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
<p>A1 and A2 are assessed both formatively and summatively throughout all modules.</p> <p>MCQs, oral presentations, essays and written assignment are core to all Programme Strands. In addition, Learning outcome A1.4 is assessed by collaborative group tasks.</p> <p>MCQ tests and essays are used throughout the modules to assess students' knowledge of cancer management and the relief of symptoms associated with treatment and disease progression.</p> <p>All assignments require students to show evidence of horizon scanning and knowledge of current research in the relevant field.</p> <p>A3 is assessed via the research proposal and dissertation project</p>
<b>Intellectual Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme, students will be able to:</p> <p>B1 Synthesize theories and evidence to constructively challenge existing practices and treatment modalities.</p> <p>B2 Reflect upon new knowledge to critique own practice and that of clinical/ industrial teams, services and organisations.</p> <p>B3 Plan, conduct and report a programme of original research (Specific to MSc Level).</p>
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<p>Online discussion activities require students to reflect on their current practice and consider how relevant theories could be applied (B1 and B2)</p> <p>B3 is addressed via a series of formative activities and individual feedback which guides them to produce their own research proposal.</p>
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
<p>B1 and B2 are assessed via written assignments, oral presentations and collaborative tasks as outlined in Knowledge and Skills: Assessment Strategy. These assessments require students to critically appraise evidence, devise patient management plans and produce their own guidelines and practice development proposal for clinical scenarios.</p> <p>B3 is assessed via the development of a research proposal</p>
<b>Practical Skills</b>
<p>On completing the programme students will be able to:</p> <p>C1 Critically evaluate local, national and international cancer/palliative care services.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">C1.1 Evaluate palliative and end of life service provision, including challenges and opportunities at local, national and international level (Specific to Palliative Care Strand)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">C1.2 Critically evaluate the outcome of cancer screening programmes on cancer mortality rates (Specific to Oncology Strand)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">C1.3 Critically examine the interface between the pharmaceutical industry and health care (Specific to Pharma Strand)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">C1.4 Create a support network for self and staff involved in caring for people at the end of life (Specific to Palliative Care Strand)</p> <p>C2 Formulate and present evidence-based clinical management plans and service development proposals in a range appropriate formats dependent on the stakeholder group concerned.</p>

C2.1 Formulate and present safe and effective evidence-based clinical management plans (Specific to Oncology and Palliative Care Strands)

C2.2 Formulate and present an implementation plan for a new cancer technology (specific to Pharma Strand)

C3 Use e-learning technology such as virtual learning environments effectively.

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

C1 is developed via directed reading, online tutorials. Activities incorporated in the tutorials include case studies which require students to contribute to online discussions and critically appraise existing practices.

C2 is addressed initially by an induction module and then throughout the programme through the method of delivery and by moderation of interactive activities by module leaders.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

C1 and C2 are assessed both formatively and summatively throughout all modules.

Written assignments are core to all Programme Strands. Learning outcome C1.2 is assessed by a collaborative task. Learning outcome C1.4 is assessed by participation in online discussions.

C1 is predominantly assessed via a range of written assessments which require students to critically appraise evidence, devise patient management plans and produce their own guidelines for clinical scenarios.

C2 and C3 are assessed formatively throughout the course by moderation of collaborative activities and summatively through a participation mark (where appropriate).

#### **Transferable/Key Skills**

On completing the programme students will be able to:

D1 competently and sensitively disseminate new knowledge acquired to colleagues, patients and families

D2 assume responsibility for facilitating practice development within their respective discipline and workplace (specific to PGT Diploma/MSc level)

D3 actively promote seamless interagency and multi-professional care (specific to Diploma/MSc Level)

D4 communicate effectively verbally and in writing

D5 use library and other information sources skilfully and appropriately

D6 plan, organise and prioritise work activities in order to meet deadlines

D7 work independently

D8 use e-learning skills to interact appropriately in on-line environments

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

D1-D3 are developed throughout the programme via directed reading, online tutorials and collaborative activities. Activities require reflection on current practice and discussion of practice development.

The course is designed in a way that requires students to address D4- D8 throughout its duration. These skills are developed through the requirement to carry out and produce written assignments in all modules

and the dissertation. Formative feedback is given regularly throughout the modules by regular interaction with module leaders.

### **Assessment Strategy**

D1 is summatively assessed via a range of online presentation software platforms which should be aimed at a group of peers and formatively via discussion activities where best practice is shared within the cohort. D2-D3 are assessed throughout the course via written assessments which require students to reflect on their own practice and consider issues in a multidisciplinary context.

D4- D8 These skills are formatively assessed through the written assignments and dissertation. D5 and D7 are not summatively assessed independently, although they are indirectly assessed through the successful production of written assignments and the dissertation. D8 is assessed formatively throughout the course by moderation of collaborative activities and summatively via a participation mark (where appropriate).

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

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

This programme is a part time, on-line programme which has three pathways: Oncology, Palliative Care and Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry.

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.

The three MSc pathways of Oncology, Palliative Care or Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry comprise of 180 credits. Alternatively, students can work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology, Palliative Care or Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry (120 credits) or a Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology, Palliative Care, Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry or Cancer Studies (60 credits).

A master's candidate shall study taught modules to a value of 120 credits and a dissertation project to a value of 60 credits.

A student may exit the programme prior to the award of the MSc, with either a Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology, a Postgraduate Diploma in Palliative Care or a Postgraduate Diploma in Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry having gained 120 credits. Students may exit the Postgraduate Diploma or MSc programme with a Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology, a Postgraduate Certificate in Palliative Care, a Postgraduate Certificate in Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry or a Postgraduate Certificate in Cancer Studies having gained 60 credits.

Modules are either 10 or 20 credits, with the exception of the Dissertation module which is 60 credits. Full details of all modules are provided in the Degree Programme Handbook and module outline forms. Students take a set of prescribed set of compulsory modules in the first or first and second year of study dependent on the programme completed.

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

All taught modules are available as standalone CPD, allowing a student to study single modules which are relevant to their line of work. To study modules as accredited CPD students must register on the standalone programme code 6041P.

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

This programme was the first web-based MSc programme in Oncology and Palliative Care to be offered.

The Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry strand offers a qualification tailored to the needs of pharmaceutical industry professionals. This is in contrast to the broad-based Oncology and Palliative Care strands which offer a solid foundation to any professional wishing to pursue a career in Oncology and Palliative Care.

All modules are delivered entirely online allowing students to study at any time and from anywhere. Material and supporting reading can be accessed across devices including PCs, tablets and other mobile devices and the flexibility of part-time allows students to fit their studies around their professional commitments. Online networking with professionals across multiple disciplines provides the opportunity to discuss activities with an awareness of multi-professional perspectives. Students are studying from around the globe giving a variety of different viewpoints and experiences, enriching online discussions.

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

[-R5397P\\_3163P\\_Pre 2022\\_2526\\_vFinal.pdf](#)

[-R5397P\\_6041P\\_2526\\_vFinal.pdf](#)

**13 Support for Student Learning**

[General Information](#)

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at:

<https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

*Induction*

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is available to all new students prior to the start of their studies as part of the induction process. New students are advised to visit the programme's online Community area on the VLE before starting their modules. Important programme documents such as the programme handbook, contact details and general support information for students studying at a distance are also available on here.

*Study skills support*

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 the VLE.

Information on VLE tools and how to navigate through its systems is available in the VLE Community. Subsequent to this, use of the system is encouraged by the design of the learning materials within the online modules. More complex tasks that require more developed skills are introduced as the modules progress.

Numeracy support is available through supervisory support and online resources offered by the University.

*Academic Support*

All students may contact the relevant module leader(s) via email. Module leaders also moderate the discussion boards. In this way the community of students support each other, with guided facilitation from the Module Leader.

Thereafter, the Degree Programme Director or Personal Tutor may be consulted.

For dissertations, the student will have a University based advisor/supervisor who will support the student in the research processes, from project planning, through the research implementation to the conclusion of the project and production of the written dissertation documents. In addition, the student will be expected to identify a workplace supervisor. The student will maintain regular contact with a named supervisor in the workplace

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

*Pastoral Support*

Each student is assigned a Personal Tutor who can be contacted for general academic advice on progress and development. They can offer students confidential help and advice about pastoral/non-academic matters and signpost students to other student services for further assistance if necessary.

In addition, the University offers a range of support services via the Wellbeing team. and the Student Advice Centre. Links to these services are available in the online Community area of the VLE and

personal tutors, module leaders and the programme team will signpost the student to the relevant services as requested.

#### *Support for Students with Disabilities*

The mode of delivery lends itself to supporting students with certain disabilities; all content is delivered online, and students never have to attend campus. The asynchronous activities allow students time to reflect and respond at their own pace.

The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University. Access to these services is signposted in the Programme Handbook and on the online Community area of the VLE.

#### *Learning Resources*

All essential learning resources that are required for activities within each module are provided and distributed via the VLE and online reading lists. Learning activities are designed with specific reference to resources that are available in an electronic format. The University's main learning resources are provided electronically by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for eBooks, journals, online resources), and University's IT Service (NUIT), which supports campus-wide computing facilities. Access to these services is signposted in the Programme Handbook and on the VLE.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources.

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

### General Information

#### *Module Reviews*

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Curriculum Committee and Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. The introduction of new modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Education Committee (FEC).

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 of the VLE so that students are fully aware of any implications.

#### *Programme Reviews*

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to FEC. The FEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Taught Programmes Sub-Committee.

#### *External Examiner Reports*

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. External Examiner reports and the response to the External Examiner from the Board of Studies are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Student-Staff Committee.

#### *Student Evaluations*

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review through online questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff Committee, and the Board of Studies. The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey is sent out every year to eligible taught postgraduate students and consists of a set of questions seeking students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

#### *Mechanisms for gaining Student Feedback*

In addition to the end of module surveys students can provide feedback on the course at any time via email and online discussion boards as well as via the Student-Staff Committee and the Board of Studies.

#### *Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo Learning and Teaching Review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review, a report is produced which forms the basis for a decision by the University Education Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

### **15 Regulation of assessment**

#### General Information

Please refer to the Postgraduate (Taught) Examination Conventions at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2019.html>

#### *Role of the External Examiner*

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by the University following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is required to:

- i. confirm whether the standards of the University's awards meet or exceed the academic standards specified in external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the UK Quality Code, subject benchmark statements, and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- ii. confirm whether the academic standards of the University's awards are consistent with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
- iii. report on whether the University's processes for assessment measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and are conducted in line with University policies and regulations;
- iv. identify, where appropriate, examples of exemplary practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment;
- v. comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

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

The University Prospectus <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/>

Programme Regulations see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/>

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.



## Annex

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

Module	MSc Oncology	MSc Palliative Care	MSc Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry	PgDip Oncology	PgDip Palliative Care	PgDip Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry	PgCert Oncology	PgCert Palliative Care	PgCert Oncology for the Pharmaceutical Industry	Intended Learning Outcomes			
										A	B	C	D
ONC8004: Developments in Diagnostic Imaging (E-learning)	C			C			C			1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,4,5,6,7,8
ONC8005: Palliative Care Themes and Perspectives (E-learning)		C			C			C		1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,4,5,6,7,8
MCR8034 introduction to Qualitative Research (E-learning)										3	2,3	3	1,4,6,7,8
MCR8019: Clinical Research Statistics (E-learning)										3	2	1,2	1,4,5,6,7,8
ONC8008: Ethical Dimensions of Cancer/Palliative Care (E-learning)										1	1	2,3	4,5,6,7,8

ONC8014: Dissertation (E-learning)	C	C	C							1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,4,5,6,7,8
ONC8016: Contemporary Issues in Palliative Care Practice (E-learning)		C			C			C		1,2,3	1,2	1,2,3	4,5,6,7,8
ONC8017: Multiprofessional Management of Cancer Part 1 (E-learning)	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
ONC8018: Multiprofessional Management of Cancer Part 2 (E-learning)	C			C			C			1,2	1,2	1,2,3	2,3,4,5,6,7,8
ONC8019: Cancer Pharmacology (E-learning)	C		C	C		C	C		C	1,2	1	2	1,4,5,6,7,8
ONC8022: Cancer Cell, Molecular Biology and Genetics (E-learning)										1,2	1	2,3	1,4,5,6,7,8
ONC8025: Cancer Pathology and Molecular Applications for Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (E-learning)										1,2		2	5,6,7,8

ONC8026: Research Methods 1 (E-learning)	C	C	C							3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,4,5,6,7, 8
ONC8027: Cancer Drug Development and Innovative therapies (E- learning)			C			C			C	2		1,2,3	1,3,4,5,6, 7,8
ONC8028: Practical Health Economics for Cancer (E-learning)			C			C			C		1,2	1,2,3	4,5,6,7,8
ONC8029: Managing Pain (E- learning)		C			C			C		1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8
ONC8030: Psychosocial Issues in Advanced Disease		C			C			C		1,2	1,2	1,2,3	1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8
ONC8097: Dissertation Part 1 (Jan) (E-learning)	C	C	C							1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,4,5,6,7, 8
ONC8098: Dissertation Part 2 (Jan) (E-learning)	C	C	C							1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,4,5,6,7, 8

\*All Masters candidates who commence their dissertation in January shall take ONC8097 and ONC8098. ONC8097 shall be taken first and then ONC898 in the following academic year.

Some modules have been withdrawn or suspended for 2025/26 – see current programme regulations for details.