

Obesity and Weight Management

Postgraduate Diploma and MSc Courses





Postgraduate Diploma

Delivered over 1 year, the online, part-time Postgraduate Diploma course is specially developed for busy health professionals. Formatted in 6 modules, each 6 weeks in duration; the course is designed to be practical and clinically focused.

MSc

The MSc runs over 1 calendar year, starting with an initial 12 week online module to develop their skills in critical appraisal and knowledge of research methodologies. Students then complete the professional project module which consists of a 1,500 word proposal and 10,500 word professional project.

Why study Obesity and Weight Management with us?

Taught completely online, our Postgraduate Diploma and MSc course in Obesity and Weight Management have been designed to extend medical knowledge of obesity and to facilitate the enhancement of patient care and procedural skills, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems-based practice – the six competency domains described by the Obesity Medicine Education Collaborative.

Our PgDip and MSc courses in Obesity and Weight Management will focus on the rapidly growing pandemic, expanding your knowledge and enabling you to effectively treat patients.

Applicants taking our courses in Obesity and Weight Management will typically be health professionals who are interested in a leadership role within weight and obesity management including GP's, doctors, nurses, physicians, surgeons, physiotherapists, dieticians, psychologists and counsellors running clinics.

Students may apply for the MSc in Obesity and Weight Management as a two year course, firstly completing the Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits), followed by the MSc (60 credits).

Obesity and Weight Management

Postgraduate Diploma

Course Modules

Our online Obesity and Weight Management Postgraduate Diploma allows you to study for just one calendar year and is a part-time, distance-learning course. The course is worth 120 credits and comprises six modules of 20 credits, each running over a period of six weeks.

Module 1 - Adipose Tissue and Energy Balance

Aim of the module:

- Develop a critical understanding and knowledge of adipose tissue, fat deposition and storage, and human energy balance.

Synopsis of module content:

- The histology and physiology of the adipocyte and adipose tissue.
- Regional distribution of body fat: sex-specific characteristics of subcutaneous, visceral and gluteo-femoral adiposity. The role of adipose tissue as an endocrine organ and its role in health and disease.
- Adipose tissue and inter-organ communication.
- Appetite regulation and the role of adipose tissue, the brain, gastrointestinal tract and other organs and tissues (e.g. liver and skeletal muscle) in the complex neuro-endocrine regulation of food intake, energy expenditure and body composition.
- Introduction to the assessment of energy intake, energy expenditure and body composition and their application in clinical weight management.

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive and critical knowledge of adipose tissue biology and the regulation of energy homeostasis, and body composition through the integrated actions of various organs and tissues.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the methods used to assess human body composition, energy intake and energy expenditure, and knowledge of the application of these methods in the setting of clinical weight management.

Module 2 - Obesity: Obesity Epidemiology and Population Health

Aim of the module:

- To critically explore obesity as a chronic disease, its epidemiology and the global burden of obesity, and obesity-related comorbidities in populations.

Synopsis of module content:

- The strengths and limitations of body mass index and the definition of obesity. Justification for classifying obesity as a disease.
- Global trends in obesity, its relationship to population health and differences in the identification of obesity in different ethnic populations.
- Abdominal obesity, metabolic syndrome and comorbidity, including obesity and cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and ectopic lipid.
- Obesity assessment in children and adults. Obesity phenotypes: overall, central and peripheral obesity.
- Ectopic fat and health.
- The economic and societal impact of obesity on a multi-level including regional, national and international levels.
- The primary prevention of obesity and the complex systems approach.

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the epidemiology and global burden of obesity, and enhanced skills in the clinical assessment and staging of individuals living with obesity.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the economic and societal impact of obesity and the wider determinants of weight gain and obesity that operate across the life course, including environmental, socioeconomic, cultural and behavioural determinants in the context of the global burden of obesity.



Little did I know that the MSc was going to be a significant stepping stone in my medical career! Both the diploma and MSc were invaluable in terms of expanding my knowledge and management of Diabetes Medicine, but also enhanced my critical thinking and writing skills.

- Dr Kevin Fernando

Module 3 - Obesity in Relation to Disease, Genetics and Environmental Factors

Aim of the module:

- To develop a critical understanding of the medical, genetic, and environmental factors that can cause weight gain and obesity.

Synopsis of module content:

- Genes (e.g. FTO, LEP/POMC/MC4, PPAR-gamma) and genetic conditions associated with obesity and obesity phenotypes (e.g. Bardet-Biedel syndrome and Prader-Willi syndrome).
- Epigenetics and gene-environment interactions in relation to obesity.
- Endocrine disorders and other conditions predisposing to weight gain and obesity (e.g. Cushing Syndrome, hypothyroidism and pregnancy).
- Drugs and their association with weight gain, including glucocorticoids, oral contraceptives and psychotropic agents.
- Environmental endocrine disruptors and other biological agents (e.g. viruses) and obesity.
- The gut microbiota

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of genetics, inherited conditions and gene-environment interactions linked with weight gain and obesity.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of selected medical conditions, drugs and other biological factors in relation to weight gain and obesity.

Module 4 - Personalised Weight Management (1): Nutrition, Physical Activity and Behavioural Interventions

Aim of the module:

- To enhance the knowledge and clinical skills required to effectively evaluate and treat obesity with emphasis on personalised care, nutrition, physical activity and behavioural modification.

Synopsis of module content:

- Analysis of specific obesity treatment guidelines.
 - Behaviour change theories and models and the clinical evaluation of the patient living with obesity to understand the obstacles to changes in behaviour and the implementation of specific strategies of behavioural modification.
 - Psychological strategies to promote behaviour change, including cognitive behavioural therapy and motivational interviewing.
 - Key concepts in human nutrition (e.g. glycaemic index and glycaemic load).
 - Hydration and obesity.
 - The evidence for nutritional interventions in personalised weight management and their application in clinical practice, including appraisal of selected and specific dietary approaches such as low-fat, low-carbohydrate and plant-based diets.
 - Appraisal of physical activity interventions and increased energy expenditure in the personalised management of obesity, including the effect of different exercise programmes on BMI, adiposity, fat distribution and obesity-related risk factors.
- Critically appraising the role and responsibilities of the multi-disciplinary team in the
- implementation and delivery of personalised weight management.

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding and application of physical activity, nutritional and behavioural interventions in the context of obesity and the personalised care of the person living with obesity.
2. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the need to work collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team and to use appropriate language, compassion and ethical behaviour when communicating with patients and their families who are living with obesity.

Module 5 - Personalised Weight Management (2): Medical Treatments and Emerging Therapies

Aim of the module:

- To enhance the knowledge and clinical skills required to effectively evaluate and treat obesity with emphasis on personalised care, pharmacotherapy and new and emerging therapies.

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"When I enrolled into the course I had no idea about the opportunities it would provide me with. Having my first paper published through this course helped me overcome my apprehensions of academic writing and made me more confident to pursue it further. "

- Rutu Dave

Synopsis of module content:

- Analysis of specific guidelines for obesity pharmacotherapy.
- The role and clinical applicability of medical therapies in weight management.
The pharmacological effects, mechanism of action, efficacy and adverse events associated with licensed medical therapies used in weight management and evaluation of the evidence.
- Unlicensed therapies used in weight management, their pharmacological properties, evidence regarding their use, controversies and legalities of use, and the associated adverse effects.
- Previously licensed/used medical therapies, their pharmacology and reasons for withdrawal with an emphasis upon pharmacovigilance and post marketing surveillance.
- The role of emerging therapies in weight management with emphasis upon the physiological basis for potential therapies.

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of medical therapies used in the clinical treatment of obesity and application of this understanding to the personalised care of the person living with obesity.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of past, current, new and emerging therapies for weight management and the role of pharmacovigilance in evaluating their adverse effects.

Module 6 - Personalised Weight Management (3): Surgical Interventions

Aim of the module:

- To enhance the knowledge and clinical skills required to effectively evaluate and treat obesity with personalised care and surgery, and to manage the post-bariatric surgery patient.

Synopsis of module content:

- Analysis of specific obesity treatment guidelines.
- Surgical approaches involved in the management of weight related disorders and evaluation of the evidence.
- Short and long-term risks associated with surgical interventions in weight management.
- The identification of patients for bariatric procedures and the role of the multi-disciplinary team.
- The critical role of the multi-disciplinary team in the management of the patient with obesity before and after bariatric surgery, including the management of post-operative nutrition and physical activity.
- The health economics of bariatric procedures and medical therapies.
- An understanding and appreciation of the need for the reversal of certain bariatric procedures. An appreciation of the health economics of bariatric procedures as well as medical therapies.
- An understanding and appreciation of the need for the reversal of certain bariatric procedures.



On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of surgical interventions used in the clinical treatment of obesity and application of this understanding to the personalised pre- and post-surgical care of the person living with obesity.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the health economic evaluation of surgical and medical interventions for obesity.

Teaching Methods

Our courses are conducted entirely online through self-directed distance learning. However, you will receive guidance throughout with tutor-stimulated academic discussions, which are based on clinically-rich case scenarios. These usually occur within groups of 10-15 students, allowing you to clearly communicate with both your tutor and fellow students.

You will participate in a combination of group and individual activities, which are recorded in a reflective journal. This innovative teaching method enables you to envisage the translation of your studies into your every day work and practice.

Our dedicated Student Support Team are also available to help with any problems you may face. From navigating our online platform to advising you on deadlines, our team can assist with any questions or challenges you may have along the way.

Study Skills Week

Once you have secured your place on the course, you will be invited to an Study Skills week webinar. This will give you the opportunity to participate in workshops on Harvard referencing, scientific and reflective writings, and levels of evidence in preparation for your studies. It is not compulsory for you to attend our Induction Day but it is recommended, as it'll provide you with a sturdy introduction to the course.

Obesity and Weight Management Postgraduate Diploma

Entry Requirements

Documents required:

- A copy of your updated CV including your address and date of birth.
- A copy of your undergraduate degree certificate.
- The name and email address of someone who is able to provide a reference, this can be a work colleague, employer or former tutor.
- A detailed personal statement explaining why you would like to undertake the course.

Applicants should submit copies of the following with their application:

Proficiency in the English language is also essential to completing our courses. If English is NOT your first language, we ask for proof of competency during the application process. We are able to accept an IELTS overall score of 6.0 (with a minimum of 5.5 for each band) or an equivalent qualification.

Health professionals working within a clinical setting, both UK and overseas, with a related Healthcare Science degree (including international qualifications) are eligible to apply for the Postgraduate Diploma in Obesity and Weight Management.

Applicants without the above academic criteria but relevant/suitable experience can apply. Applications will be judged on the individual specifics of background and qualifications including ability to work at Postgraduate level (applicants may be asked to submit a piece of work for assessment to confirm that they are able to work comfortably at postgraduate level and demonstrate requisite clinical/professional knowledge).



Obesity and Weight Management MSc

Course Modules

Module 1 - Research Methodologies and Critical Appraisal

Aim of the module:

- To enhance knowledge and understanding of evidence-based practice and policy and to prepare students to undertake an independent research-based project.

Synopsis of the module:

- Quantitative Studies
- Research and Epidemiology
- Confounding, Bias and Causality
- Statistical Analysis Interpretation
- Interpreting the Evidence
- Meta-analysis and Systematic Reviews
- Qualitative Studies and Mixed Methods Research
- Appraising, Grading, Synthesising, Summarising and Interpreting Studies
- Diagnosis, Audit and Quality Improvement
- Preparing a Research Proposal: Research Committees, Consent, Ethics, Probity and Literature Review

On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyse and interpret research to assess its application to delivery/service development.
2. Select and apply different methodological approaches and tools to answer research questions in the chosen field of study.

Module 2 - Professional Project

Aim of the module:

- To formulate the research question that you seek to answer.
- To develop an ability to critically evaluate areas of professional practice.
- To critically appraise specific areas of clinical, research and organisational practice.
- To develop skills in independent research and study.
- To develop skills relevant to scientific publications.

Synopsis of the module:

The module will depend on the creation of a piece of work based upon a specific public health-related project relevant to the student's practice.

This project may comprise:

- Systematic literature review and appraisal of the evidence.
- Audit of non-patient data/organisational audit. Review and implementation of evidence-based practice.
- Literature review and qualitative or quantitative research proposal.
- Case(s)-based and quality of service review with critical appraisal.
- Case report, review of literature and organisational assessment.
- Secondary data analysis.

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On completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Design and undertake a research and development project related to obesity and weight management in order to produce an extensive piece of literature which may be suitable for peer-reviewed publication.
2. Critically evaluate practice and suggest improvements or change in an obesity and weight management setting.
3. Incorporate knowledge of the research process in developing obesity and weight management services appropriately.

Teaching Methods

Module 1 - Research Methodologies and Critical Appraisal

MSc teaching methods for this module are similar to the Postgraduate Diploma course modules, however it is run over 12 weeks.

Module 2 - Professional Project

To produce the professional project, students continue to use the online course; however much of the work is self-directed.

Students are expected in the first 8 weeks to interact with their tutor on a weekly basis. Students select a specific project and submit a project summary/ proposal (approximately 1,500 words).

Once the proposal has been approved, the professional project (10,500 words) itself is then completed through online guidance and supervision offered by the tutor. The student and tutor will interact regularly (weekly) on the dedicated students/tutor discussion area or through any other means of communication deemed appropriate by both parties (telephone/ SKYPE/ email). Note of any verbal communication with the tutor is recorded in the student's journal by the student.

Entry Requirements

Entry to the one year Obesity and Weight Management MSc will require successful completion of the Obesity and Weight Management Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits). This can be from Diploma MSc, the University of South Wales or another UK university (having completed similar modules). We can discuss this with you during your application.

Individuals who have not completed the postgraduate diploma can apply for the Obesity and Weight Management MSc as a two year course consisting of eight modules (180 credits) with the first 120 credits deriving from the postgraduate diploma.

Entry requirements for the two-year course are as for the Postgraduate Diploma.

Applicants should be working in a clinical setting, either in the UK or overseas, and have a science degree in a relevant subject.

You will also need to submit copies of the following with your application:

- Qualification certificates
- A maximum of two professional and/or academic references
- IELTS score of 6.0 with a minimum of 5.5 for each band (or an equivalent qualification)

Graduates of this course will receive a Master of Science award from the University of South Wales, Diploma MSc's collaborative partner. The Obesity and Weight Management MSc course provides a progression route for the Postgraduate Diploma course in Obesity and Weight Management.



What do our students think?

Since 2010, over 1000 students have progressed their medical career by enrolling in one of our qualifications. We ourselves have learned a lot during this time and continually seek to improve the student learning experience. Here is what some of our previous students have said:

"I found the online learning very interesting. It enabled me to save money and time."

Dr Imad Eddin Rahamtalla, Doctor

"I strongly recommend Diploma MSc to all those busy physicians who are working in remote areas and wish to upgrade their knowledge."

Dr Junaid Zaffar, Diabetologist

"The learning was fun and enjoyable. The course was awesome and it increased my confidence."

Dr Sankar Nath Jha, Assistant Professor

"I found learning with Diploma MSc interesting, it helped to update my academic knowledge."

Dr Prasanth Kinattupurayil, Doctor

"I love that it was flexible and that I could log in at my convenience. I found this course to be very in-depth, informative, challenging and stimulating."

Kerri-Ann Best PGDip, RD



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