

MSc ADVANCED CLINICAL PRACTICE IN OPHTHALMOLOGY DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP

WHAT IS A DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP?

Degree apprenticeships are a relatively new type of programme offered by some Universities where students can achieve a full academic degree alongside obtaining practical work-based learning in the UK.

These programmes are developed by Universities in conjunction with employers and professional bodies, working in partnership, and they are overseen by the Institute for Apprenticeships

WHO FUNDS THE APPRENTICESHIP?

The University tuition fee is paid by the Apprenticeship Levy which is a UK tax on employers and can be used to fund the University fee for their training. In the current tax year, it is payable by all employers with an annual wage bill of more than £3 million at a rate of 0.5% of their total wage bill.

Most large employers and NHS Trusts have an apprenticeship levy pot they can draw down from to cover the University tuition fee on eligible programmes. NHS Trust employers can also apply to Health Education England for a bursary to help support supervision in the workplace.

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THIS DEGREE APPRENTICESHIP?

The aim of this degree is to provide the necessary skills and knowledge for non-medical ophthalmic practitioners to take on extended roles in ophthalmology in cataract, glaucoma, medical retina and ocular emergencies. It is expected that practitioners will work in these extended roles on completion of the degree. This apprenticeship is not designed to be undertaken by experienced practitioners; however, experienced practitioners who are new to a clinical area or scope of practice could apply for the programme.

Apprentices should be employed throughout the programme and they will be expected to carry out work-based learning in relevant clinical areas which is organised and supervised by the employer. Tripartite progress reviews will be carried out every 12 weeks between the University, Apprentice and Employer to ensure that all is going well.

WHO CAN DO THIS APPRENTICESHIP?

Optometrists, orthoptists and nurses with an ophthalmic specialty. Applicants would require an upper second-class BSc (Hons.) UK degree. Ophthalmic nurses who already have OCCC levels 1 and 2 competencies is desirable.

Knowledge of how to use a slit lamp is desirable.

The Institute for Apprenticeships also require evidence of level 2 Maths and English at GCSE grade C or above and is part of our standard entry requirements.

WHAT ARE THE CAREER PROSPECTS ON COMPLETION OF THIS DEGREE?

This is a challenging yet rewarding degree. Graduates will be in a position to work autonomously within their scope of practice in an ophthalmology clinical setting. They will also be equipped with the skills to run and lead clinics and/or services, educate and supervise others, conduct audit and research, design and implement quality improvement projects if required to do so, thus enabling career progression.

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC DEGREE?

This degree apprenticeship has been developed around the Advanced Clinical Practice apprenticeship standard incorporating four pillars; clinical, research, education and leadership. Details of the standard can be found at:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/advanced-clinical-practitioner-degree/>

This Masters Programme is a three-year-part-time degree.

(Nb: A Masters programme consists of 180 credits and 60 credits are expected to be completed per annum).

Compulsory modules:

1. Principles of Advanced Practice (15 credits)
2. Fundamental Glaucoma (15 credits)
3. Fundamental Medical Retina (15 credits)
4. Fundamental Ocular Emergencies (15 credits)
5. Principles of Cataract (15 credits)
6. Clinical Leadership (15 credits)
7. Research Methods and Statistics (15 credits)
8. Research report (30 credits)
9. End Point Assessment and Journal Article (30 credits)

ONE optional module from a chosen specialist clinical area:

10. Specialist Glaucoma (15 credits)
11. Specialist Medical Retina 1 (15 credits)
12. Specialist Ocular Emergencies (15 credits)

The glaucoma and medical retina modules are also accredited for the College of Optometrists Higher Qualifications. Work based learning and assessments will give a student the Ocular Common Clinical Competency Framework (OCCCF) level 3 competency sign offs.

Delivery of teaching is done entirely online, and this model lends itself well to working professionals where study can be done at student's own pace and time. An *optional* practical skills day will be held at the end of the first year in London. A virtual compulsory induction week is held towards the end of September every academic year. There will be assessments in December and April/May of each academic year.

Students will be expected to attend webinars and complete assignments whilst studying throughout their degree and study days should be factored in for these.

The degree will follow the following format:

Year 1 (60 credits)

TERM 1	Sept-Dec	TERM 2	Jan-April	TERM 3	June - Sept.
Principles of Advanced Practice	Compulsory 15 credits	Principles of Cataract	Compulsory 15 credits	Work based learning	
Fundamental Medical retina	Compulsory 15 credits	Clinical Leadership	Compulsory 15 credits		
PLUS WORK BASED LEARNING		PLUS WORK BASED LEARNING			

PROGRESS REVIEW – carried out by the Institute for Apprenticeships

Year 2 (60 credits)

TERM 1	Sept-Dec	TERM 2	Jan-April	TERM 3	June - Sept.
Fundamental Ocular Emergencies	Compulsory 15 credits	Research Methods and Statistics	Compulsory 15 credits	Work based learning	
Fundamental Glaucoma	Compulsory 15 credits	Specialist area (choose ONE): -Specialist Glaucoma -Specialist Ocular emergencies -Specialist Medical Retina	Optional 15 credits		
PLUS WORK BASED LEARNING		PLUS WORK BASED LEARNING			

PROGRESS REVIEW – carried out by the Institute for Apprenticeships

Year 3 (60 credits)

TERM 1 and TERM 2	
Research report	30 credits

PROGRESS REVIEW – carried out by the Institute for Apprenticeships

APPRENTICESHIP GATEWAY – Institute for Apprenticeships assess whether candidate is suitable to go onto the End Point Assessment. English and Maths requirements, work-based learning and assessment sign offs from employer are confirmed, tripartite reviews are checked by the Institute for Apprenticeships before approval is given.

TERM 3	
End Point Assessment (carried out by UCL)	30 credits

Note: the proportion of work-based learning to academic learning can vary between terms 1,2 and 3 in the first two years. We would expect the bulk of this will be carried out in term 3, however, it is expected that work-based learning will be done throughout the year. In the third year, this should be equally split between all three terms.

THE COMMITMENT BY STUDENTS

A commitment statement will need to be signed by the student and their employer with the University.

- A firm commitment to complete all three years of the degree. The Institute for Apprenticeships have stipulated that:
 - Interim awards are not available, and the programme cannot be restarted once terminated.
 - A student cannot apply for the levy again for any programme in the future if a programme has been terminated.
 - Parts of the programme cannot be postponed.
- At least 10 hours of study a week needs to be carried out by students
- All assignments need to be submitted on time and progress should follow the key timelines set out by module leaders. All lectures and assessments should be attended as should participation in all online forum activities ie 100% attendance is expected.
- To build and maintain a portfolio of practice throughout the degree.

THE COMMITMENT BY EMPLOYERS

Employers are required to sign a commitment statement with the University before the student can start a programme as confirmation that the necessary support and development arrangements will be in place.

- It is a funding requirement of apprenticeships that students spend 20% of their contracted hours off the job training and needs to be provided by the employer.
 - This time can be used by students towards training delivered at UCL ie studying, assignments, webinars, exams etc.
 - Within the workplace it can include work-place learning and sign offs, not as part of their normal duties in dedicated clinics.
 - It cannot include time spent during tripartite progress reviews (between student, tutor and employer) which are carried out four times a year, or on programme assessments or training which takes place outside the student's working hours.

- A commitment that the employer will be responsible for providing or arranging work-based learning, education and clinical supervision, work-based assessment (competency sign-offs) and portfolio reviews in the areas studied eg if a student is undertaking the medical retina module, observerships and examination of patients in medical retina clinics will need to be carried out etc.
- A portfolio of patients seen must be kept throughout the programme. The University will provide requirements for the portfolio and competency sign-offs and the employer is responsible for final review and sign off before a student can proceed to the End Point Assessment.
 - If experience cannot be gained within the workplace, you need to liaise with your dedicated apprenticeship manager to approach another apprenticeship manager in an alternative workplace to see if clinical experience can be arranged elsewhere. This may incur extra charges and will be entirely upto the workplace being approached to take on the student. The apprenticeship levy does not cover any of the workplace-based learning and the University is not responsible for organising or providing workplace-based learning.

- A commitment to carrying out tripartite progress reviews on time.
- Students must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours a week in order to complete this degree in three years. If employed for fewer hours, the degree will take longer to undertake.

NEXT STEPS

Applicants must apply in conjunction with their employer after approval from their apprenticeship manager. If you are interested in the apprenticeship, the first step would be to liaise with your line manager (if you are a prospective student) and workplace apprenticeship manager. If they are happy to sign a commitment statement incorporating the main points above, enter into an apprenticeship contract with UCL and for the levy to be used towards your training, please email ioo.admissions@ucl.ac.uk for an application form (applications run from mid-November to the end of July). Note that places on this programme are limited and will be processed on a first come, first served basis.

CAN I UNDERTAKE THE ACADEMIC DEGREE OUTSIDE THE APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME?

If the degree apprenticeship structure does not work for you, we also run a parallel degree which is not funded by the levy. More information can be found at:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/taught-degrees/advanced-practice-in-optometry-and-ophthalmology-msc>

and at:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioo/study-institute>

CONTACT AND QUESTIONS

If you have any further questions, please email:

ioo.admissions@ucl.ac.uk

ioo.pgt@ucl.ac.uk