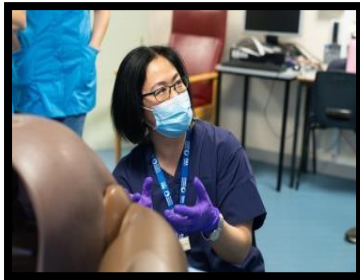


Department of Allied Health Professions, Midwifery and Social Work

A flexible route to NHSE recognition as a Musculoskeletal First Contact Practitioner (FCP) in Primary Care



With an established reputation for running successful NHS England (NHSE) approved First Contact Practitioner (FCP) short courses, the University of Hertfordshire has again been awarded a contract by NHSE to offer **fully funded** training for registered Musculoskeletal (MSK) Practitioners, Paramedics, Occupational Therapists and Dietitians.

Why should you study?

FCP roles are integral to providing a sustainable and effective workforce, optimising patient care pathways and ensuring the right healthcare professional sees the right patient in the right place and at the right time. By 2024, all adults in England should be able to see an MSK FCP at their local GP practice without being referred by a GP. The benefits of these roles are manifold, and include facilitating timely and appropriate onward referrals, reducing imaging referral rates and enhancing patient experience and outcomes (NHS England, 2019). NHSE's 'Roadmap to Practice' sets out the training and educational pathways to FCP recognition for MSK practitioners (HEE, 2021). The University of Hertfordshire's flexible programme of study is approved by NHSE as fulfilling stages 1 and 2 of the FCP Roadmap. The University of Hertfordshire is one of only select few providers in England approved by NHSE to deliver this training.

What will it involve?

All applicants will initially undertake a Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) to establish if they would be most suited to undertake either:

1. A supported ePortfolio route (please note this route does not condone Level 7 credits), or
2. The taught short course route to becoming a recognised FCP, consisting of two short courses:
 1. First Contact Practitioner 1 (FCP1): 30 Credits at Level 7, and
 2. First Contact Practitioner 2 (FCP2): normally 15 credits at Level 7 (please note the credit rating of FCP 2 is currently being reviewed)

FCP 1 and FCP 2 short courses form part of a broader CPD framework & currently can contribute up to 45 Level 7 credits towards the awards of [Postgraduate Certificate](#), [Postgraduate Diploma](#) or [MSc Advanced Physiotherapy](#) or [MSc Advanced Clinical Practice](#) or [Masters in Health Studies](#) for eligible candidates.

Who will I study with?

FCP1 focuses on MSK practitioners (registered Physiotherapists and Osteopaths), with selected sessions shared with multidisciplinary FCP professionals (OTs, Paramedics, Dietetics), facilitating networking opportunities and a deeper understanding of the expansive FCP role. FCP2 is predominantly undertaken in primary care as supervised practice, supported by interdisciplinary university FCP2 study. If you are undertaking the supported portfolio route you will be working with a named academic tutor to support the development and submission of your portfolio within a community of similar students, alongside your clinical supervisor.

How will I learn?

This programme of study has been developed to be innovative, progressive and accessible with the aim of developing high quality FCPs for the future. Students undertaking the supported portfolio route will be working collaboratively with a university academic tutor and meetings will normally be on-line and individual to student needs. For FCP1 & FCP2 short courses the university teaching is on-line. Teaching uses synchronous and asynchronous activities including lectures, tutorials, workshops, group work and presentations, involving previously successful students and relevant stakeholders, use of case studies and supported peer learning. FCP1 covers the theoretical content of the Road Map and FCP2 enables consolidation of knowledge and skills with a period of supervised practice, which is supported by the university team, a clinical mentor and peer review sessions. Both these activities are supported through the use of enhanced technology, so students will require access to a PC & reliable internet connection. Varied assessment methods helps to support different learning styles.

What do our previous FCP students say?

"[this course] will ensure competence & quality of FCP clinicians"

"It was really good to have the module on-line, easier to fit in clinics & life without travel"

"I have already made changes to my practice"

"Really enjoyed it and the content. Feel I've learnt a lot since I first started"

"Amazing experience, all the respective tutors each day of the course were literally amazing"

"The entire team is very supportive, felt quite comfortable to discuss anything"

Who teaches these on this programme of study?

Past and future contributors include Rishi Navsaria (Consultant Physiotherapist), Dr Giles Hazan (GP), Elizabeth Ward (leadership & management), Marie Tanner (APP), Aldo Russell De Boer (APP), Laura Eccott (ACP & Senior Lecturer), Dr Hubert van Griensven and Dr Robert Shannon (Clinical Psychologist), along with other clinical and research experts.

What are the entry requirements?

Applications are welcome from qualified, experienced & highly motivated MSK practitioners (HCPC registered Physiotherapists & GOsC registered Osteopaths) who want to be change makers in the clinical field, working at an enhanced level of practice.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate:

- Evidence of current registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)
- Current evidence of appropriate Professional Indemnity/Liability Insurance as outlined by a relevant professional regulatory body, e.g. Current Membership of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) which includes current Professional Liability Insurance or The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) (evidenced by provision of membership number and appropriate insurance certificate)
- A minimum of five years post registration experience with a minimum of three years' experience within an MSK role (evidenced by CV, confirmation from employer and qualification certificates)
- Evidence of successful level seven (Masters level) education, this could include a pre-registration MSc MSK qualification, accredited MSc modules etc*
- Evidence of working in, or working towards, an NHS based MSK FCP role on completion of study (evidenced by confirmation from employer)
- Confirmation of access to an appropriately qualified Clinical Supervisor, i.e. a GP, consultant practitioner, recognised advanced practitioner (recognised by the NHSE centre having completed the portfolio route to advanced practitioner or the taught ACP master's degree), or more experienced MSK first contact physiotherapist. Supervisors will normally have completed the 2-day roadmap to practice supervision training prior to supervising student on FCP Stage 2 (note any Tier 3 Advanced Practitioner or Tier 3 GP Educational Supervisors do not need to attend the training days, but instead should be able to complete a short online resource)
- Evidence of support to undertake 75 hours of ring-fenced clinical supervision scheduled in an NHS Primary Care workplace based in England if completing FCP2 (evidenced by confirmation from employer)
- At every stage, evidence of up to date statutory and mandatory training in their area of practice (evidenced by confirmation from employer)

- Evidence (certificates to be supplied) of contemporaneous completion of: 1. Eight e-learning modules ([e-learning for healthcare, E-LfH](#)) modules as stated in the Roadmap to Practice (MSK) 2. Selected Personalised Care Institute modules (found at: <https://www.personalisedcareinstitute.org.uk/education-and-training/your-learning-options/>)

*Applications are also welcome from learners with significant relevant clinical experience and relevant, current, CPD (evidenced by CV). All applications will be considered on an individual basis.

To be signed off as a First Contact Practitioner learners must successfully complete the FCP ePortfolio route or achieve a pass in both short courses, therefore it is expected that successful students from FCP1 enrol on FCP2. All applications will be considered on an individual basis. The deadline for applications is 31st January 2026. The course will close once we have received sufficient applications. You are advised to apply as soon as possible.

Cost This programme of study is fully funded by NHSE. There are a limited number of places.

First Contact Practitioner 1 (FCP1): 30 Credits at Level 7

Course aim

On successful completion of this short course students should be able to demonstrate critical knowledge and understanding of theories, principles and concepts underpinning evidence based MSK practice in Primary Care.

This course is equivalent to 300 hours of student effort including ten teaching days & one assessment day

Provisional Teaching Dates:

3rd March & 4th March 2026; 24th March & 25th March 2026; 28th April & 29th April 2026; 19th May & 20th May 2026; 16th June & 17th June 2026. Assessment dates: w/c 6th July 2026

University based sessions are taught on-line, with student attendance required on-line.

First Contact Practitioner 2 (FCP2): 15 Credits at Level 7

Course aim

On successful completion of this short course students should be able to develop advanced clinical and evaluative skills and to critically evaluate the effectiveness of aspects of service delivery within the FCP scope of practice. In addition, be able to evidence capabilities required for an FCP role, whilst working alongside the multi professional healthcare team within Primary Care to provide high quality services.

This course is equivalent to 150 hours of student effort including five on-line synchronous teaching days & one assessment day

Provisional Teaching Dates:

3rd & 4th November 2026; 8th & 9th December 2026; 13th January 2027

Assessment dates:

Summative QIP (due 11th Feb 2027); Portfolio (due 26th Feb 2027); Professional VIVA (w/c 22nd March 2027).

University based sessions are taught on-line, with student attendance required on-line. Students will need to complete 75 hours of mentored clinical practice as part of FCP2.

Course Enquiries

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Booking Enquiries

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