



**AECC**  
**University College**  
*Transforming lives  
through Health Sciences*

# **MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health) Course Specification**

**Version 1.1**

**Document date: February 2019  
Applies to students entering the MSc Advanced  
Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health)  
course as an AECC University College award  
October 2019 and thereafter**

## MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health) Course Specification Contents

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### Record of Modifications

| Description of Modification   | Date approved          | Cohort(s) to which modification applies |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Amendment of admissions regulations to include time limit for RPL and internal progression from Postgraduate Certificate Professional Practice (Chiropractic) | ADQC, 27 February 2019 | Entry for October 2019 and thereafter   |
|   |                        |   |

## Title: MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health)

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

Programmes, major changes to programmes and modifications to programmes are approved following consideration through the AECC University College's programme approval and review processes or Programme and Unit Modification procedure, as appropriate. It is, however, expected that programmes change over time, for example as a result of changes to professional accreditation requirements, in response to feedback from faculty and students, and through annual review processes. Any such changes will be discussed with and communicated to students in an appropriate and timely manner.

### Basic Programme Information

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Awarding Institution   | AECC University College  |
| Final award, title and credits   | MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health)<br>180 Level 7 Credits (90 ECTS)  |
| Interim exit awards, titles and credits                                | PgCert Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health)<br>60 Level 7 Credits (30 ECTS)<br>PgDip Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health)<br>120 Level 7 Credits (60 ECTS) |
| FHEQ level of final award  | 7  |
| Mode of study  | Part time/blended  |
| Accreditation details  | None   |
| Standard length of programme   | Normally 3-4 years   |
| Minimum and maximum periods of study                                   | Minimum 1<br>Maximum 5   |
| Language of delivery   | English  |
| Place of delivery  | AECC University College  |
| UCAS code (where applicable)   | n/a  |
| HESA JACS (Joint Academic Coding System) Code(s) per programme/pathway | B340   |
| Date Framework /Programme initially validated                          | Programme initially approved as award of Bournemouth University October 2015.<br>Approved as award of the AECC University College July 2017.   |
| Date of first intake   | 10/2017  |
| Version number of this Framework/Programme Specification               | 1.1  |
| Date this version approved/intake to which this applies                | February 2019/01.10.2019   |
| Author   | ML Thiel; J Bolton   |

## Programme Overview

### 1. Admissions regulations and entry requirements

The regulations for this programme are the AECC University College Standard Admission Regulations together with the Postgraduate schedule to this policy which may be found at the [Policies for Students webpage](#). These regulations include the entry requirements and specific requirements regarding English language.

Students who have successfully completed the Postgraduate Certificate Professional Development (Chiropractic) will be exempted from MSc APP core unit Professional Clinical Practice (20 credits at level 7), on the basis of a demonstrated mapping between the learning outcomes for this unit and the PGCert core unit Autonomous Reflective Practice (20 credits at level 7). This arrangement will apply within the time-limit specified in the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy which can be found at the [Policies for Students webpage](#).

#### Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

AECC University College has a Recognition of Prior Learning Policy which can be found at the [Policies for Students webpage](#). The time-limits for recognition of RPL are set out in this policy and are applicable to this course.

### 2. Aims of the programme

The aims of the programme are to:

- demonstrate in a professional role as an independent and autonomous practitioner.
- demonstrate reflection on professional activity, identifying learning needs and strategies to meet these.
- provide evidence and critical evaluation of quality improvement in professional practice.
- demonstrate a critical awareness of the professional knowledge base.
- demonstrate evidence-based practice through the critical use of a diverse range of evidence
- inform the knowledge base in an area of professional practice through scientific enquiry.
- demonstrate the attitudes and skills to direct and undertake continuing professional development throughout professional life.

### 3. Intended Learning Outcomes

All ILOs are in keeping with developing and advancing the practising professional through reflective practice and critical thinking. As such, all ILOs are at level 7 reflecting the ability to use and apply knowledge and skills to solve problems in complex situations where there may be incomplete information and uncertainty. Students are expected to work at the forefront of their discipline informed by a range of evidence, and acting autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at the professional level.

There are no interim level ILOs as all ILOs regardless of stage of the programme are at level 7, and students will choose between optional units to tailor the programme to their own professional needs.

#### Subject Knowledge and Understanding

Having successfully completed this programme students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- A1. Reflective practice, critical thinking and experiential learning

### **3. Intended Learning Outcomes**

- A2. Advanced knowledge and understanding at the forefront of named areas of practice
- A3. Patient centred care and evidence based practice models
- A4. Epistemological principles and empirical observation (MSc stage only)
- A5. Expert knowledge in an area of research or clinical audit investigation (MSc stage only)
- A6. Strategies and protocols at the forefront of the discipline for the functional management of musculoskeletal conditions and injuries

#### **Intellectual Skills**

Having successfully completed this programme students will be able to:

- B1. Demonstrate critical evaluation of professional practice to develop and improve in a professional role
- B2. Demonstrate self-direction and autonomy defining relevant learning needs leading to quality improvement in practice
- B3. Demonstrate critical awareness and synthesis of current knowledge and skills in specific areas of practice
- B4. Demonstrate ability to critically appraise and interpret empirical evidence and apply to professional practice
- B5. Demonstrate critical evaluation of existing knowledge to identify areas for further development
- B6. Demonstrate mastery of the current knowledge base relevant to an area of professional practice
- B7. Demonstrate mastery of the current knowledge base relevant to functional management of patients and/or the athlete

#### **Practical Skills**

Having successfully completed this programme students will be able to:

- C1. Demonstrate advanced professional practice skills in specific areas of practice
- C2. Demonstrate advanced professional skills in delivering care safely, effectively, efficiently and within a regulatory framework
- C3. Demonstrate advanced skills in quality improvement based on reflective practice and critical thinking
- C4. Demonstrate the skills of systematic scientific enquiry (MSc stage only)
- C5. Demonstrate advanced practical skills necessary for the functional management of musculoskeletal conditions and injuries

#### **Transferable skills**

Having successfully completed this programme students will be able to:

- D1. Demonstrate ability to seamlessly undertake reflective, evidence-based and patient-centred practice
- D2. Demonstrate skills to undertake CPD throughout professional life resulting in quality improvement
- D3. Demonstrate continue to advance knowledge and skills to a high level
- D4. Demonstrate investigative skills generating original knowledge with professional relevance
- D5. Effectively communicate findings and conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

## Programme Structure

### 4. Outline of programme content

The MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health) is part of the-MSc Advanced Professional Practice Framework, a contextual and conceptual framework of programmes for healthcare professionals. The framework centres on an individual's own professional practice and the centrality of reflection in identification of learning needs, acquisition of knowledge and skills, and critical evaluation of change and improvement in professional practice. These generic concepts underpin many of the programme units providing a systematic yet flexible programme that facilitates the needs of individual students in specific subject and skills areas. The Framework has generic aims and ILOs, but these are adapted to the named Programme by being applied in different clinical applications. The generic nature of many units in the Framework allows these to be 'shared' across the programmes in this framework so that although students from different programmes undertake the same units, the focus of their work reflects their own subject discipline.

There are three Programmes included in this Framework. The MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health) and Paediatric Musculoskeletal Health) have a specialist focus, with the third retaining a generic base enabling a range of relevant areas to be studied in depth. All Programmes are open to healthcare professionals from a variety of disciplines, encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to postgraduate study. Irrespective of the Programme, all students follow the normal pattern of PgCert, PgDip and MSc stages, and exit points are possible at the end of each stage. The MSc stage requires a dissertation based on systematic inquiry, either in the form of research or clinical audit.

The underpinning rationale for this programme is to develop the professional practitioner to an advanced level. In this programme we are not concerned with professional competencies expected of the novice practitioner, but in advancing these based on reflective and evidence-based practice. Level 7 ILOs enable this by focusing on critical thinking and writing, and the ability to form judgements and develop arguments based on a range of evidence types. As such, the ILOs across all stages of the Programmes are all set at level 7, conforming to the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the QAA Master's degree characteristics (March 2010).

### 5. Placements, work-based learning or other special features of the programme

An optional 40 credit unit, Clinical Placement, is available to students. Students opting to take this unit are required to undertake a placement outside their usual place of work, be in an area relevant to the named pathway and agreed beforehand by both the Unit Leader and the Programme Leader. Students are responsible for identifying and proposing their own placement and a placement supervisor to guide and advise them during the placement. An explanation of the supervisor's role will be included in the Clinical Placement Handbook. The clinical placement will be subject to signed agreement by the appropriate authority at the placement site, and issues of professional indemnity on the part of the student.

### 6. Programme structure, levels, units credit and award

The level of study, units and credits required for the programme and for final and exit awards are set out in is set out in the **programme diagram** provided as [Appendix 1](#).

The **learning outcomes mapping document** at [Appendix 2](#) shows the relationship between ILOs for units and the overarching ILOs of the programme.

## Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### 7. Learning and teaching strategies and methods

All teaching and learning methods are based on the theoretical models of learning at the advanced professional practitioner stage including experiential learning, adult and self-directed learning, and

## **7. Learning and teaching strategies and methods**

reflective practice skills. Based on this, the primary learning environment will be the individual's workplace, most likely the clinical setting. Students will be expected to identify their own learning needs arising from their professional practice, and to meet these and reflect on their learning experiences and learned outcomes within the Unit so that the Unit ILOs can be evidenced.

Supporting autonomous and self-directed learning will be a range of learning resources. Tutorial support will be available for all units in the form of face-to-face meetings, and/or email and/or phone. Students will be expected to contact the Unit Leader or other relevant academic tutor, and in keeping with the learning strategy receive advice on an individual basis. This is particularly the case for the MSc stage where students will be assigned a supervisor to support and advise them in the planning and execution of their research or clinical audit work.

Students will also engage with their peers and academic tutors in seminars and face-to-face teaching. These are planned well in advance so that students can attend, and are often held over a two or three day period so that students can interact with teaching staff and with each other. For some units, for example in the MSc Functional Musculoskeletal Health programme, students will attend CPD events put on by the University College. In addition to the formal lecture format, students in the MSc Functional Musculoskeletal Health programme will attend practical workshops and engage with staff and peers in advancing their practical skills.

A Programme Handbook will provide students with details how to access and use the VLE through which e-journals may be accessed and library searches conducted together with other information about the programme including contact details for tutors. As the entire programme is taught and ILOs set a level 7, there is no progression in terms of levels in the teaching and learning strategy.

## **8. Assessment strategies and methods**

All assessments are based on evidencing the ILOs at level 7. At this level, evidence of critical thinking through critical writing skills is assessed through written work including reflective assignments and reflective log books. There are no examinations (either written or practical) in this Framework on the basis that there is no assessment of competency of practice since this is assumed in the professional status of the student. Instead, the Framework is looking toward development and advancing knowledge and skills in defined areas, and in particular critical evaluation and quality improvement of practice. Even though the emphasis is on reflective practice and critical thinking and writing skills, students will evidence these through a range of different assignments. On one hand are those based on patient cases and clinical scenarios, whereas on the other are those based on learning experiences from attending CPD events and critical appraisal of knowledge gained through empirical observation. Moreover, students will undertake critical report writing of their own research or clinical audit, and writing protocols in the planning stages of these studies.

Emphasis on critical writing skills is reflected in teaching students this skill set in the Induction seminar, and continuous feedback on the student's ability in this area when assessed work is returned to the student.

Students receive feedback on their work through an assessment feedback form which grades individual assessment criteria and gives an overall grade for the work. In addition to the grade students receive literal feedback through the open comments box. In specified units students are given the opportunity to submit a draft of their work for feedback before their final submission.

## **9. Learning hours**

AECC University College programmes are composed of units of study, which are assigned a credit value indicating the amount of learning undertaken. The minimum credit value of a unit is normally 20 credits. 20 credits is the equivalent of 200 student study hours, including lectures, seminars, assessment and independent study. 20 University credits are equivalent to 10 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits.

## 10. Staff delivering the programme

Students will be taught by AECC University College academic staff and qualified professional practitioners with relevant expertise.

## 11. Progression and assessment regulations

The regulations for this programme are the AECC University College Standard Assessment Regulations which may be found at <https://www.aecc.ac.uk/about/how-we-work/latest-policies/>. Please refer to section 18.

## 12. Additional costs

Additional costs are mandatory or optional costs which students will need to meet in order to fully participate in and complete their programme. Students will need to budget for these costs separately as they are not included in the overall Tuition Fee they are charged. Information about additional costs applying to students on this programme can be found in the document [Important information to take into account when choosing your programme](#). There are also optional costs that apply to the programme. These are however not required in order to complete the programme

## 13. Methods for evaluating the quality of learning and teaching

Students have the opportunity to engage in the quality assurance and enhancement of their programmes in a number of ways, which may include:

- Completing student surveys annually to give feedback on individual units and on the programme as a whole
- Seeking nomination as a Student Union representative OR engaging with these elected student representatives
- Serving as a student representative on Evaluation panels for programme approval/review
- Taking part in programme approval or professional body meetings by joining a group of students to meet with the panel
- Taking part in meetings with the external examiner(s) for the programme (such meetings may take place virtually where programmes are part-time)

The ways in which the quality of the University College's programmes are monitored and assured checked, both inside and outside the institution, are:

- Annual monitoring of units and programmes
- Periodic Programme review, at least every six years.
- External examiners, who produce an annual report
- Oversight by Academic Development and Quality Committee (which includes student representation), reporting to Academic Board
- External Quality Assurance Reviews and annual monitoring

## 14. Inclusivity statement

AECC University College is committed to being an institution where students and staff from all backgrounds can flourish. AECC University College recognises the importance of equality of opportunity and promoting diversity, in accordance with our Dignity Diversity and Equality Policy. We are committed to a working and learning environment that is free from physical, verbal and non-verbal harassment and bullying of individuals on any grounds, and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, within a positive and satisfying learning and working environment.

AECC University College seeks to ensure that all students admitted to our programmes have the opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. The interests of students with protected characteristics will be taken into consideration and reasonable adjustments will be made provided



#### **14. Inclusivity statement**

that these do not compromise academic or professional standards as expressed through the learning outcomes.

#### **15. Reference points including QAA Benchmark statements**

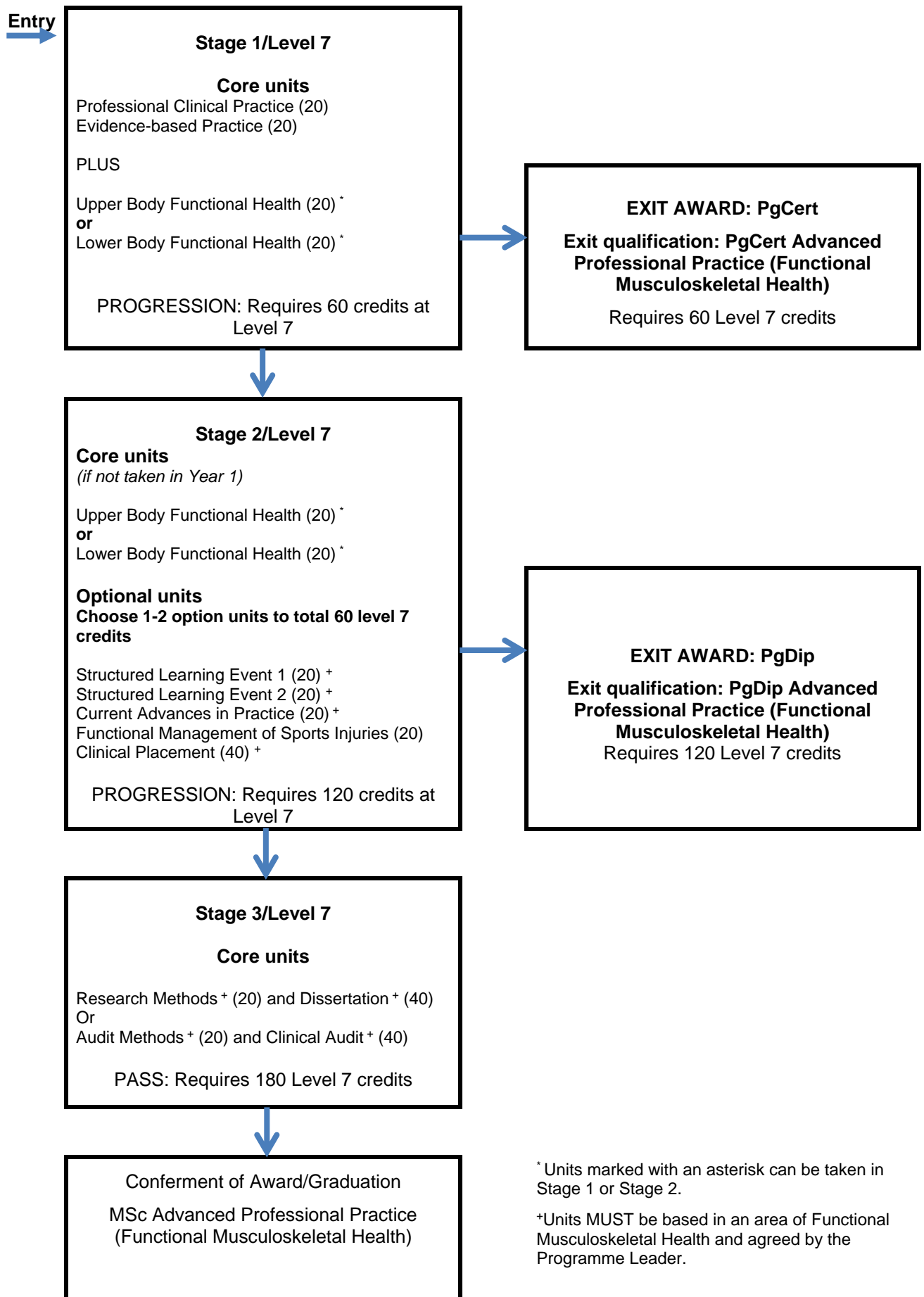
The following reference points were used to inform the development of this Programme:

- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education; Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards;  
Chapter A1: UK and European reference points for academic standards (October 2013) - incorporates Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- QAA, Master's degree characteristics (March 2010)

#### **16. Regulatory & policy framework**

The programme conforms fully with the AECC University College Academic Regulations and Policies for Taught Programmes.

## Appendix 1: Programme Diagram MSc Advanced Professional Practice (Functional Musculoskeletal Health)



## Appendix 2: Learning outcomes mapping document

This table shows where a learning outcome referenced in the programme specification may be demonstrated by successful completion of a unit.

| Unit Code |  | Subject Knowledge and Understanding |     |     |     |     |     | Intellectual Skills |     |     |     |     |     |     | Practical Skills |     |     |     |     | Transferable skills |     |     |     |    |
|-----------|--|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
|           |  | A 1                                 | A 2 | A 3 | A 4 | A 5 | A 6 | B 1                 | B 2 | B 3 | B 4 | B 5 | B 6 | B 7 | C 1              | C 2 | C 3 | C 4 | C 5 | D 1                 | D 2 | D 3 | D 4 | D5 |
| 20        | Professional Clinical Practice           | *                                   |     | *   |     |     |     | *                   | *   |     | *   |     |     |     |                  | *   | *   |     |     | *                   | *   | *   |     | *  |
| 40, 41    | Structured Learning Event (1 and 2)      | *                                   | *   | *   |     |     |     | *                   | *   | *   | *   |     | *   |     |                  |     | *   |     |     | *                   | *   | *   |     | *  |
| 21        | Evidence-based Practice                  | *                                   | *   | *   |     |     |     | *                   | *   | *   | *   | *   | *   |     | *                | *   | *   |     |     | *                   | *   | *   | *   | *  |
| 32        | Functional Management of Sports Injuries | *                                   | *   | *   |     |     | *   | *                   | *   | *   | *   |     | *   | *   | *                | *   | *   |     | *   | *                   | *   | *   |     | *  |
| 30        | Upper Body Functional Health             | *                                   | *   | *   |     |     | *   | *                   | *   | *   | *   |     | *   | *   | *                | *   | *   |     | *   | *                   | *   | *   |     | *  |
| 31        | Lower Body Functional Health             | *                                   | *   | *   |     |     | *   | *                   | *   | *   | *   |     | *   | *   | *                | *   | *   |     | *   | *                   | *   | *   |     | *  |
| 22        | Current Advances in Practice             | *                                   | *   | *   |     |     |     |                     |     | *   |     | *   | *   |     |                  |     | *   |     |     | *                   |     | *   | *   | *  |
| 37        | Clinical Placement                       | *                                   | *   | *   |     |     |     | *                   | *   | *   | *   |     | *   |     | *                | *   | *   |     |     | *                   |     | *   |     |    |
| 51        | Research Methods                         |                                     | *   |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     |     | *   | *   | *   |     |                  |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     | *   | *   | *  |
| 52        | Dissertation                             |                                     | *   |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     |     | *   | *   | *   |     |                  |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     | *   | *   | *  |
| 53        | Audit Methods                            |                                     | *   |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     |     | *   | *   | *   |     |                  |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     | *   | *   | *  |
| 54        | Clinical Audit                           |                                     | *   |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     |     | *   | *   | *   |     |                  |     | *   | *   |     |                     |     | *   | *   | *  |

Shaded areas represent skills specific to MSc stage