



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

# MSc Chiropractic Course Specification

**Version 1.1**

(Course commenced 2018)

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### Record of Modifications

Description of Modification	Date approved	Cohort(s) to which modification applies
Change of timeline so each unit completed within an academic year: split former unit 401 into units 408 and 409, and amend credits; amend credits for unit 406 to 20 credits	27.02.19 ADQC	2019 entry and thereafter

Logo amended 20.11.18

## Title of course: MSc Chiropractic

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course 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.

Courses, major changes to courses and modifications to courses are approved following consideration through the University College's Course Approval and Review processes or Course and Unit Modification procedure, as appropriate. It is, however, expected that courses change over time, for example as a result of changes to professional accreditation requirements, in response to feedback from academic staff 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 Course Information

Awarding Institution	AECC University College
Final award, title and credits	MSc Chiropractic  Year 1: 120 Credits (60ECTS) level 7 Year 2: 120 Credits (60ECTS) level 7
Interim exit awards, titles and credits	PGCert Human Sciences 60 Credits (30ECTS) level 7 PGDip Human Sciences 120 Credits (60ECTS) level 7
FHEQ level of final award	Level 7
Mode of study	Full time
Accreditation details	General Chiropractic Council European Council on Chiropractic Education
Standard length of course	2 years
Maximum period of study	3 years
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 course/pathway	B320
Date Framework /Course initially validated	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
Date of first intake	September 2018
Version number of this Framework/Course Specification	v1.1
Date this version approved/intake to which this applies	February 2019/September 2019
Author	Victoria Wheeldon

## Course Overview

### 1. Admissions regulations and entry requirements

Standard admissions regulations do not apply to this course.

Students are normally expected to have successfully met all the learning outcomes at level 6 of the AECC University College MChiro course with a minimum of 2:i classification and passed the Clinic Entrance Qualifying Examination (CEQE OSLE) before they may enrol on this course. There will be a maximum allocation of 25 students accepted onto this course each year. Applications will be assessed using a gathered field once results are known to allow a fair process for internal and external applicants. Unconditional offers will be made to the students whose year 3 summative marks are a minimum of 2:i; and ranked on the basis of their aggregate mark.

Applications may be accepted from candidates who are not currently enrolled on the AECC University College MChiro course, and these applications would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would be subject to AECC University College Admissions Regulations and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policies, which can be found from the [Latest Policies webpage](#). Places will be offered to these applicants in the same manner as internal applicants, as outlined above.

### 2. Aims of the course

The practice of chiropractic emphasises manual treatments to relieve pain, discomfort and disability and to restore optimal function within a patient-centred, biopsychosocial, healthcare model. Chiropractors traditionally operate as independent practitioners within the private sector, either through primary contact or referral, but they can also treat NHS-funded patients through the Any Qualified Provider (AQP) scheme.

This course of study aims to:

- Prepare graduates to act as safe and competent primary contact clinicians who have practical experience of research methodology and application.
- Produce graduates who can deliver the highest standards of care in the context of and responding to their community needs and the wider healthcare environment.
- Produce graduates capable of practising within a patient-centred model with the skills and approach that enable the integration of critically-evaluated research evidence, clinical expertise and patient choice.
- Produce graduates with attitudes and skills that engender lifelong learning and continuing professional development with a view to achieving the highest professional standards of clinical care.
- Provide graduates with an understanding of the scientific method and experience of designing, undertaking, analysing and present primary research within the context of modern healthcare.
- Produce graduates with effective skills of listening, interpreting and communicating within the healthcare arena with emphasis on the psychosocial issues inherent with this activity.

Subject to GCC approval of the course, those who successfully complete this course will be eligible for General Chiropractic Council (GCC) registration (GCC & Privy Council approval pending) as a chiropractor and thus will be qualified to work as a private healthcare practitioner within the UK.

### 3. Intended Learning Outcomes

The primary goal of the Master of Chiropractic course is to prepare graduates to act as safe and competent primary contact chiropractic clinicians within the wider health care community. Graduates should be capable of delivering the highest standards of care and respond to the health needs of their community and current health systems, cognisant of evidence-based practice and patient-centred models. Students are expected to develop the attitudes and transferable skills that will enable them to become effective professionals with a commitment to life-long learning and

### 3. Intended Learning Outcomes

continuing professional development. Students will be expected to operate in complex and unpredictable clinical situations in which judgements of a scientific, clinical, moral and ethical nature must be made. Students will be able to demonstrate the knowledge & skills necessary to be able to design and carry out primary research, analyse & publish it. The course will provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding and skills as follows:

#### **Subject Knowledge and Understanding**

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

- A1 The basis and principles of chiropractic in a contemporary context.
- A2 The place of evidence-informed practice and values-based practice in contemporary health care.
- A3 The range of conditions that present to chiropractors as independent primary contact practitioners, the nature and impact of their physical, psychological and social aspects.
- A4 Selected drug actions appropriate to the management or co-management of musculoskeletal conditions and patients who present to chiropractors.
- A5 The context and nature of chiropractic as a regulated profession in the UK, and the duties of chiropractors as registered primary healthcare professionals.
- A6 The legal, moral and ethical responsibilities involved in protecting and promoting the health of individual patients, their dependents and the public– including vulnerable groups such as children, older people, people with learning disabilities and people with mental illnesses.
- A7 The different research methodologies, data collection & analysis skills available to clinical researchers.
- A8 Ethical and governance issues relating to both clinical practice and research studies, and how to apply these.

#### **Intellectual Skills**

Having successfully completed this course students will be able to:

- B1 Identify their own learning needs, plan their own learning and development and evaluate its effectiveness, required for continuing professional development.
- B2 Critically appraise the results of relevant studies as reported in the chiropractic, medical and scientific literature and appropriately apply findings from the literature to answer questions raised by specific clinical problems.
- B3 Formulate a plan for the appropriate assessment, treatment and management of patients, according to established principles and best evidence, in partnership with the patient and other health professionals as appropriate.
- B4 Make sound clinical judgments in the absence of complete data, assess and recognise the severity of a clinical presentation and the need for immediate emergency care and appraise and recommend appropriate strategies for a range of ethical dilemmas that might affect chiropractors.
- B5 Acquire, assess and integrate new knowledge, demonstrating originality in the application of knowledge.
- B6 Learn to adapt to changing circumstances and demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems to ensure that patients receive the highest level of professional care.
- B7 Demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge with critical evaluation and insight of emerging contemporaneous knowledge, and be able to apply this to the field of primary research.

### 3. Intended Learning Outcomes

- B8 Compare and critique the appropriateness of different research methodologies with a view to designing and undertaking primary data collection in a way contiguous with the wider scientific community.

#### Practical Skills

Having successfully completed this course students will be able to:

- C1 Confidently take and record a patient's medical history using appropriate methods to draw out the necessary information.
- C2 Perform and interpret a range of diagnostic procedures, appropriate to the conditions that commonly present to chiropractors as well as those that may masquerade as musculoskeletal complaints, and measure and record the findings.
- C3 Perform a wide range of therapeutic psychomotor and condition management skills, selecting and applying each of them to meet the needs of individual patients, utilising the best available evidence and/or patient values, and managing patients in a manner that is in consonance with ethical professional practice.
- C4 Communicate appropriately (both verbally and in writing) with patients, their relatives or other carers, and colleagues from the medical and other professions and keep accurate, attributable, legible and complete clinical records, which are representative of the interaction with the patient.
- C5 Employ the principles and methods of self-improvement, including reflection, audit, adverse incident reporting and quality improvement and gain experience in how to use the results of audit to apply continuous quality improvement in their practice.
- C6 Provide basic first aid and life support including cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and/or directing other team members to carry out resuscitation.
- C7 Apply sound research methodology to gather and analyse data to reach conclusions and present it in a format suitable for peer review.

#### Transferable skills

Having successfully completed this course students will be able to:

- D1 Communicate clearly, sensitively and effectively with patients and others, by listening, sharing and responding, regardless of their age, social, cultural or ethnic backgrounds or their disabilities, including when English is not the patient's first language and provide explanation, advice, reassurance and support.
- D2 Manage time, prioritise tasks, exercise initiative and work autonomously when necessary and appropriate.
- D3 Make effective use of computers and other information systems, including storing and retrieving information and access these sources to use the information in relation to patient care, health promotion, giving advice and information to patients and for research and education.
- D4 Understand the importance of lifelong and independent learning required for continuing professional development, including the demonstration of intellectual progression with a professional development portfolio containing reflections, achievements and learning needs.
- D5 Function effectively as a mentor and give effective, constructive feedback to junior colleagues.
- D6 Understand and respect the roles and expertise of other healthcare professionals in the context of working and learning in a multi-disciplinary approach, seeking their advice when necessary.

### 3. Intended Learning Outcomes

- D7 Work with colleagues, and not in isolation from them, in ways that best serve the interests of patients, passing on information and handing over care, demonstrating flexibility, adaptability and a problem-solving approach.
- D8 Continually and systematically reflect on practice and, whenever necessary, translate that reflection into action, using improvement techniques and audit appropriately, especially in complex and unpredictable situations.
- D9 Recognise and work within the limits of their own personal and professional knowledge, skills and experience and seek help from colleagues and others when necessary.
- D10 Effectively apply knowledge of the scientific method to aid their own clinical decision making and practically apply this to carrying out research.

## Course Structure

### 4. Outline of course content

The MSc Chiropractic course was designed to comply with the 'Education Standards' published by the General Chiropractic Council (GCC, 2017) and with the 'Accreditation Procedures and Standards in First Qualification Chiropractic Education and Training' published by the European Council on Chiropractic Education' (ECCE, 2017). The level of intended learning outcomes for the MSc Chiropractic course conforms to the standards set out in the QAA document 'Framework for Higher Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland'.

The course incorporates and integrates knowledge from the informing disciplines with the knowledge and skills of diagnostic and therapeutic disciplines necessary for the safe and competent practice of chiropractic. The course contains a clinical placement, self-directed study, advanced research methods, opportunity for data collection & primary research, as well as other teaching. At the point of graduation, students will be equipped for, and capable of, independent practice which includes the ability to integrate knowledge from a variety of sources, critically appraise relevant information and effectively apply this to various clinical scenarios in the management of individual patients within the framework of a modern, regulated healthcare profession, or to further a career in clinical research or academia.

A typically 97 week clinical placement provides the student with the opportunity to assess and manage patients in the out-patient chiropractic clinic setting. All cases which the student sees are managed by a qualified chiropractor who provides guidance in management decisions; however the student is expected to identify and carry out their own learning and reflection for each case. The student must also complete the relevant clinical requirements necessary to produce their own clinical portfolio of cases.

The clinical placement provides experiential learning which can be applied to the units which aim to develop the student's ethical and professional practice, and their use of research in their daily practice.

Introduction is given to the principles of business management and marketing necessary to enable the student to start a small business when they enter practice.

An advanced research methods unit will build on existing research methodology knowledge, and develop the skills necessary to collect both quantitative & qualitative data necessary for producing high quality research studies. These skills can be used in the dissertation module, where students are expected to research, design, carry out and produce their own piece of written research work, suitable for publication in an academic peer-reviewed journal. These skills and experience are crucial for students wishing to progress to a career in research or academia.

Deeper reflection and critical evaluation is undertaken in a unit designed to instil in the student the skills of self-evaluation and reflective practice. Students are encouraged to assess and critique

#### 4. Outline of course content

their decision making skills and actions against recognised frameworks and models, to allow significant in-depth evaluation of their development to enable professional and personal growth.

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

Throughout the course, clinical students are provided with the opportunity for direct experiential learning. The compulsory clinical internship normally lasts for around 97 weeks (including allocated leave periods) during which time students are normally expected to complete the assessment & management of a minimum of 40 new patients within the outpatient chiropractic clinic. Completion of all of the clinical requirements for this internship is mandatory to exit with the qualification of MSc Chiropractic. This includes (but is not limited to) obtaining formative feedback on your own skills, engaging with the rehabilitation of patients and the community outreach programme. All AECC University College clinic processes and procedures are clearly outlined in the Clinic Manual, which is an online document available to all students. All processes and procedures outlined in the Clinic Manual must always be followed during this clinical internship. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

The teaching clinic is a primary contact health care facility offering high-quality, diagnostic and musculoskeletal care to the public. This affords students a broad range of hands-on clinical experience under direct supervision of experienced registered clinicians, including chiropractors and other health care providers. This experience further enhances the development of autonomous practitioners who will interact, engage and work with other health care practitioners.

Observations are arranged in allied health profession situations, to allow the student to contextualise the role of chiropractic within the wider health community. The student is also expected to arrange some of their own observational opportunities to aid this learning.

Training will be given on the use of specialist equipment which can be used to collect data for use in clinical and rehabilitative research.

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

The level of study, units and credits required for the course and for final and exit awards are set out in the **course 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 course.

### Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

In a modern healthcare profession it is vital that clinicians have not only technical knowledge, but also a wide range of transferable skills including critical thinking, research skills, IT skills, communication skills and the ability to undertake continuing professional development. Therefore the teaching and learning strategies for this course provide a blended learning approach that encourages students to develop as independent learners and to contextualise their prior knowledge within clinical scenarios. A mix of traditional and innovative learning and teaching methods, such as lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, practical skills classes, e-learning, videos, quizzes and self-directed study, are blended to provide the best learning experience as is suited to each individual subject under study.

Students undertake a clinical internship under the supervision, guidance and support of a multidisciplinary team of experienced chiropractic, medical and other relevant healthcare professionals, where they continue their learning through experiential and reflective clinical practice. During the internship students are required to discuss and defend their patient management in a reasoned manner supporting their choices with the best available evidence where appropriate. In this way the students are continuously challenged to demonstrate a critical awareness of their

## 7. Learning and teaching strategies and methods

beliefs and opinions, reflect on these in light of contemporary clinical research and communicate their conclusions concisely and coherently.

Students apply reflective and research skills and explore the meaning of professional practice; concepts that are developed throughout the course. The development, design and implementation of their own research study allows students to explore the field of scientific data collection within the modern healthcare arena.

## 8. Assessment strategies and methods

The assessment strategies and methods used throughout this course have been chosen to reflect those most appropriate to the knowledge, understanding or skill under assessment as well as the level of study. Some examples of the progression of assessment and rationale are as follows:

Written examinations will normally combine Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), Extended Matching Questions (EMQ) and narrative style questions, with a mix appropriate to the subject matter being assessed and the level of study.

- Coursework will include both individual and group work, and a range of different assessment types such as viva and presentation. Where reflection is encouraged within the course, its use in assessment is combined with professional development portfolios to demonstrate reflective clinical practice.
- Objective structured long examination record (OSLER), direct observation of procedural skills (DOPs), and assessment of clinical competence (ACCs) will be used to assess clinical skills competence in practical settings.

An indication of the types of assessment used in this course is shown below:

Level	Assessment Type																		
	Examination																		
	MCQ/EMQ	Narrative Style Written Assessment	Oral Viva	Script Concordance	Group Poster	Group Presentation	Individual Presentation	Laboratory Report	Logbook of reflective reports	Practical Skills Viva	Reflective Essay/Report	Portfolio	Written Long Clinical Case	Essay	Group Marketing & Business Plan	Evidence-based Case Report	OSLER	DOPS*	ACCs*
7	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* DOPs and ACCs are designed to feed-forward enabling the students to reflect on their clinical skills, and plan and undertake further development to improve on their performance. The learning cycle undertaken as a result is formally assessed within the clinical portfolio.

Feedback provided by academics, clinicians and peers on formative and summative assessments throughout the course, is designed to stimulate reflection and enhance personal development planning.

## 9. Learning hours

AECC University College courses 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 UK credits are equivalent to 10 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits.

## 10. Staff delivering the course

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 course are the University College's Standard Assessment Regulations which may be found from the [Latest Policies webpage](#). Please refer to section 22 for regulations specific to the MSc Chiropractic.

## 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 course. 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 course can be found in the document **Important information to take into account when choosing your course** available from the [Latest Policies webpage](#)

- Appropriate professional clothing & footwear is required while working in the clinic. This does not have to be expensive, but must comply with the clinic clothing policy.
- Diagnostic equipment is required during the clinical internship. It is likely that the student will have already purchased this during their previous studies.
- Travel to observations and any necessary associated costs e.g. accommodation.
- The college will pay a limited amount towards the carrying out of your research study, subject to prior approval, however you may be required to make up the shortfall.

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

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

- Completing student surveys annually to give feedback on individual units and on the course as a whole
- Taking part in focus groups as arranged
- Seeking nomination as a Student Union representative OR engaging with these elected student representatives
- Serving as a student representative on Evaluation panels for course approval/review
- Taking part in course 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 course (such meetings may take place virtually where courses are part-time)

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

- Annual monitoring of units and courses
- Periodic Course 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
- Professional body accreditation and annual reports to these bodies *[delete if not applicable]*
- 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 courses 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 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 course:

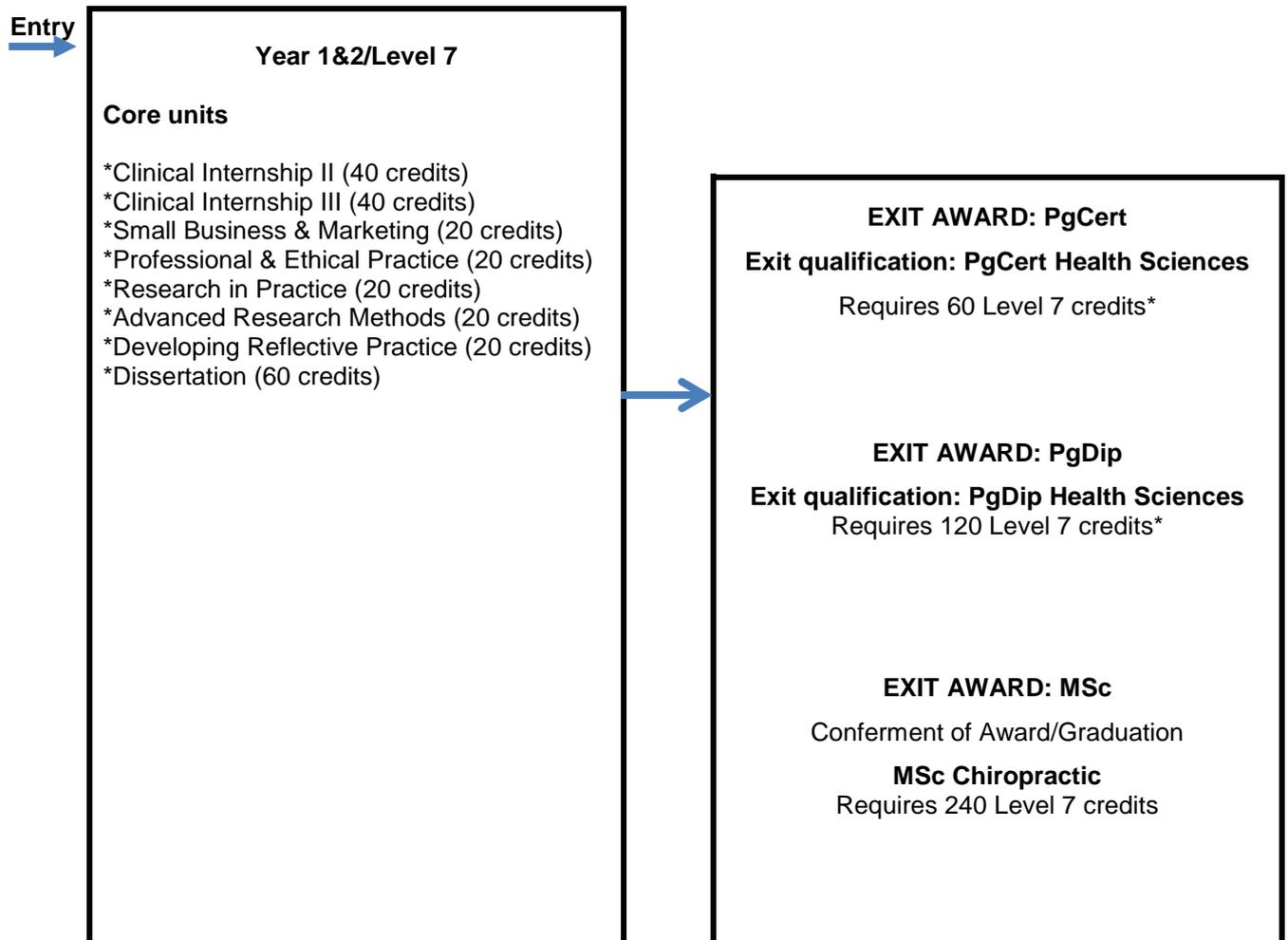
- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter A1: The National Level (incorporating the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ))
- QAA subject benchmark statements for comparable professions (Physiotherapy (2001) & Clinical Sciences (2004))
- General Chiropractic Council (UK) Education Standards (effective from September 2017), and The Code: Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for chiropractors (effective from 30 June 2016) (GCC & Privy Council approval pending)
- European Council on Chiropractic Education; Accreditation Procedures and Standards in First Qualification Chiropractic Education and Training (November 2017)
- QAA Characteristics Statement: Masters Degree (September 2015)

There are no subject-specific benchmark statements for chiropractic education. The QAA document Master's degree characteristics (September 2015), was used to inform the development of the course, in accordance with criteria & guidance given in the GCC documentation (GCC & Privy Council approval pending).

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

The course conforms fully with the University College's Academic Regulations and Policies for Taught Courses.

## Appendix 1 Course Diagram MSc Chiropractic



\* There are no interim level ILOs as all ILOs regardless of stage of the programme are at level 7.

Any interim awards conferred will be on the basis of successful completion of sufficient level 7 learning outcomes in the listed units to achieve the required number of credits for the relevant award.

Credits from other level 7 units will not be considered for the conferment of any of the awards in this programme.

Only completion of all units will confer the award of MSc Chiropractic, which is the only award which allows the holder to practise as a chiropractor.

## Appendix 2: Learning outcomes mapping document template

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

Units	Knowledge & Understanding							Intellectual Skills								Practical Skills						Transferable Skills									
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10
408 Clinical Internship II	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
409 Clinical Internship III	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
402 Marketing & Small Business Management					√							√		√						√			√	√						√	
403 Professional & Ethical Practice	√				√	√				√	√								√					√			√	√		√	
404 Research Informed Practice		√					√	√	√	√		√	√	√						√			√	√	√			√	√		
405 Advanced Research Methods							√					√								√			√							√	√
406 Developing Reflective Practice	√	√			√			√	√				√	√						√			√		√		√	√	√	√	
407 Dissertation							√		√					√									√					√		√	√