

# Posture Management for People with Complex Disabilities

## Postgraduate Certificate 2025-26

Oxford Centre for Enablement, Windmill Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 7HE

### Full course information

- Virtual meet and greet: **11 September 2025 2.30pm**
- **Block 1:** 22-25 September 2025
- **Block 2:** 03-05 November 2025
- **Block 3:** 02-04 February 2026
- **Block 4 and viva exam:** 13-16 April 2026

### Rationale

The increasing numbers of people who are surviving with long term physical disability, and the severity and complexity of their physical conditions, highlight the need for additional expertise in the management of severe and complex postural presentations.

This field is developing in an effort to provide the optimum quality of life for people with disabilities and their carers.

People have many difficulties when functional ability deteriorates. There is an ongoing need to reduce or prevent the secondary complications that are frequently associated with loss of posture and motor control e.g. pressure sores and altered body shape.

The cost and effort of care required to meet the needs of people in these situations is high. This course aims to provide professionals with the knowledge and expertise to manage the physical condition of a person with complex disability in a variety of environments, utilising a range of available resources as cost effectively as possible.

To address the posture needs of the client is as important as enabling function and mobility, and the problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle require more than the provision of seating. Posture for daily living throughout a 24-hour cycle should be holistically addressed and be appropriate to the social and environmental circumstances of all concerned.

Attempting to resolve the range of difficulties presented, for example, inappropriate environments, stressed and anxious carers, acute crises and chronic problems, requires knowledge and skills of a high

calibre. Those professionals acquiring the specialist knowledge and expertise that derives from the course should be equipped with the skills to train care personnel in posture management.

The expertise gained on this course will complement that offered by therapists, surgeons, orthotists, prosthetists, engineers, nurses and other specialists in the rehabilitation team for people with complex disabilities.

## **Scope**

This is a Postgraduate Certificate at Master of Science level (level 7), focusing on posture control, comprehensive assessment and physical management over 24 hours.

It seeks to meet the need for specialist expertise through the in-depth study of posture and function, and the development of the requisite critical thinking to facilitate the objective review of evidence-based practice.

The course provides a foundation in biomechanics relevant to posture assessment for people lacking independent posture control. Postures under normal and pathological conditions are studied, including the development and cause of secondary complications.

The principles underlying posture management are addressed. Strategies for the 24-hour management of postural deficits arising from neurological impairments are discussed and methods of facilitating sitting, lying and standing are explored.

A holistic approach is made so that functional, social, environmental, physical and psychological aspects of disability are considered in 24 hour posture management strategies.

Students will have an opportunity to explore further interventions which facilitate the physical management of people who lack independent posture control and who have developed significant secondary complications. Such interventions include surgery, drug treatments and the use of specialised equipment. There are opportunities to examine and critically evaluate research in the field.

## **Unique selling points of the programme**

In addition to facilitating development of academic skills, the course provides a practical, clinical learning experience with adoption of learning into the workplace as is necessary to complete the written assignments

The aim is to equip students with the knowledge and expertise to execute assessment and treatment of people with complex disability in relation to 24-hour posture management

In the UK it is the **only** Postgraduate Certificate in Posture Management for people with complex disability

It has evolved from the learning and teaching of Pauline Pope, one of the foremost pioneers of posture management in the country.

## **Admission regulations**

Potential students for this course should have:

- (a) a degree/diploma in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, engineering, nursing, or equivalent
- **OR** (b) other European Community or overseas qualifications and experience deemed equivalent to the above
- **OR** (c) evidence of 120 credits at level 3 or equivalent in a health care related field of study
- **AND** (d) be working with severely physically disabled people routinely, and be in a setting which enables them to achieve the professional learning outcomes of the course; students will have access to appropriate clients i.e., children and/or adults with complex disabilities, and to appropriate assessment facilities
- **AND** (e) at least two years' experience of neurological conditions and people with complex disabilities: normally candidates will be expected to have a broad based clinical experience in a variety of departments e.g., paediatric, older persons, neurology, orthopaedic
- **AND** (f) a statement of agreement from their manager to support them in their learning as part of continuing professional development in the workplace
- **AND** (g) be sufficiently physically fit to participate in practical group work and to undertake physical assessment of people with physical disability
- **AND** (h) if English is not the applicant's first language, have an English language qualification such as International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) 6.5 or above

Prospective students are advised that they will be selected for inclusion to the course by the course team. Selection is informed by the details provided on the application form. The course team will review all applications.

Interviews are routine but a strong supporting statement may mitigate the need for this. See application form for more information.

### **Duration**

Nine months comprising four separate taught blocks, two of four days duration and two of three days duration and with intermediate study online, plus a follow-up online viva examination at the end of the fourth block of study.

The course must be completed within three years of commencement.

### **Learning**

This will be an intensive course of study. Theoretical and applied learning during the taught blocks must be augmented by clinical practice in the workplace. In addition, participants will be expected to spend considerable time reading and undertaking written work. Self-directed learning is a critical aspect of the course.

### **Hours**

The total number of hours of student effort required is 600hrs. Of this total 100 hours are spent in the four teaching blocks of the course, leaving 500 hours to be spent by the students over 9 months i.e., approximately 12 hours per week. A significant proportion of the latter will be taken up by practising the taught techniques and method in the workplace during the non-teaching weeks.

## **Self-directed study, course work and assessment**

Students will be expected to complete the following work before and during the course. Assessment of the items in italics will contribute to the summative assessment of the course and accreditation of CATS points.

### **Pre-course reading**

Online learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars

### **Between blocks 1 and 2**

Practice of clinical skills with clients

### ***Reading***

Online learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars

### **Between blocks 2 and 3**

Practice of clinical skills with clients

### ***Reading***

Online learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars

### **Assignment I: First case study of a client**

### **Between blocks 3 and 4**

Practice of clinical skills with clients

### ***Reading***

Online learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars

### **Assignment II: Critical appraisal of a scientific paper**

### **After block 4**

Practice of clinical skills with clients

### ***Reading***

Online learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars

### **Assignment III: Second case study of a client**

Oral test

## **Accreditation**

The course is accredited at 60 CATS points by Oxford Brookes University.

It will also provide between 40 and 60 credits with other education providers, dependent upon its potential for integration with their course modules.

## **Number of students**

Maximum 20 students. The course team reserves the right to decide the minimum number of students for whom the course will run.

**Location**

Oxford Centre for Enablement  
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre  
Windmill Road  
Headington  
Oxford OX3 7HE

**Cost**

£2,500

**Applications**

Please visit: [www.brookes.ac.uk/hls-direct-short-courses](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/hls-direct-short-courses)

**Registration is required.**

There is an embedded form for you to provide additional information and your manager's statement of support.

We will communicate separately with you regarding funding, but within the Brookes portal you must select 'self funding' when prompted for the funding type, because fees are collected by ourselves at the OCE, **not** by Brookes.

This is an integral part of the process which is required to allow your application to progress.

Once your application has been approved, the Course Administrator from Oxford Centre for Enablement will contact you to arrange payment of fees.

**Queries**

Queries about the application process may be directed to:

**Programme Administration Centre at the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences**

Email: [alicemitchell@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:alicemitchell@brookes.ac.uk)

Other enquiries should be directed to:

**Oxford Centre for Enablement**

Email: [OCEcourseadmin@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:OCEcourseadmin@ouh.nhs.uk)

Tel: **01865 227879**