

**University of Brighton
Faculty of Health**

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Do you wish to :

- **Combine professional practice with scholarly inquiry ?**
- **Integrate theory with practice in order to promote professional change ?**
- **Evaluate your specialist discipline area through the development of research skills ?**
- **Undertake personal and professional development within an inter-professional context ?**

If the answer to these questions is 'Yes', then our Professional Doctorate in Health and Social Care may be just what you need. This four-year, part-time programme is designed to provide experienced health and social care professionals like yourself with the opportunity to develop advanced research skills and knowledge in the theory and practice of your discipline, and to pursue original lines of research in areas of direct relevance to your work.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Professional Doctorate ?

It is a doctoral research degree, equivalent in status and challenge to a PhD. It comprises a minimum of 4 years part-time study and allows you to use the title 'Dr'. The seven awards are :

Professional Doctorate in Midwifery (D.Mid)
Professional Doctorate in Nursing (D.Nursing)
Professional Doctorate in Occupational Therapy (D.Occ.T)
Professional Doctorate in Physiotherapy (D.P.T)
Professional Doctorate in Podiatry (D.Pod)
Professional Doctorate in Social Work (D.S.W)
Professional Doctorate in Counselling and Psychotherapy (D.C.P)

The professional doctorate programme offers you the advantage of multi-professional peer support throughout your studies. Regular study days will use seminars and workshops to explore issues of scholarly and research interest, and also provide time for action learning set meetings and personal supervision.

What would a Professional Doctorate do for me ?

The doctoral programme aims to foster specialist competencies to an advanced level and promote evidence-based practice development. The value and quality of your practice and research will be enhanced through:

- Study sessions concerning current thinking on critical issues, specifically focused on the development needs of health and social care professionals.
- Individualised tutorial support to ensure your work reaches high standards of excellence
- Support, stimulation and challenge from a peer group of professional colleagues also working at a high level of practice and research
- Access to supervision from a programme team with a very wide range of development and research interests and many years of professional experience
- Access to university library facilities (including a large number of journals accessed electronically), and the use of an online learning environment, enabling you to keep in easy touch with your peers and supervisors
- Development of a wider national and international perspective
- Enabling you to bring cutting edge developments back to your service to share with colleagues
- Building ongoing productive links between health and social services and universities
- Raising the profile, credibility, and influence of your profession in both academic and practice contexts.

What does 'doctoral level' mean ?

We normally expect students to have had successful Masters-level experience before joining the Doctoral Programme. Research-based study at doctoral level is expected to lead to the generation of original knowledge, and this implies a greater intolerance of closure and resolution of issues and controversies, and a correspondingly higher level of tolerance for complexity and uncertainty. We would expect, for example :

- Compared to work at Masters level, a keener and more critical reading of research literature with the ability to differentiate and evaluate between competing schools of thought;
- The capacity to bring to bear multiple perspectives for understanding professional issues (e.g. political, ethical, cognitive, historical, methodological);
- A view of professional practice as merely the temporary resolution of competing demands and needs;

- A view which suggests that we have a temporary 'lease' on professional knowledge, rather than control over it;
- A sense of intellectual curiosity and an acceptance of change.

Why have regular study days ?

A central feature of this programme is that you will be studying with the same group of people over the whole four years. This means we can sustain research questions and interests, maintain a continuous conversation about research and use the group as a self-help resource. The group experience provides opportunities to learn about your practice through close comparison with other professionals. Action learning sets will support you in focusing upon each stage and task in your journey towards a doctorate.

How will I find the time ?

You might expect to allocate half a day per week of employed time and the same of your own time. However, as your assignments in Stage One, and your final thesis, are very likely to be based on development work you are doing as part of your employment anyway, this should not be too much of a problem. Also, you will need to be physically at the university for only a small proportion of this time: 16 days a year for the first two years, and 8 days a year for the final two years. However, you will obviously need the support of your line manager and will need to plan and allocate your time carefully - as ever!

Do I need a research topic to start the course ?

No. Although we ask you to think about how research will relate to your professional experience in your application, we simply need to know how you think about research in the context of your practice setting. Even if you have a firm research topic in mind for your thesis, we would not be surprised if you were to change it over the course of the first two years of Stage One.

What are the fees and additional costs ?

The annual course fee for 2005-2006 is £1900. Unless you live in the south-east, you might have to think about residential costs for the study days. There will be additional costs to support your studies - these might include books, reprographics, tape recorders, travel and subsistence if your field site is some distance away - and printing and binding of your thesis.

Am I eligible to apply ?

If you have successfully completed a Masters level programme, are registered to practice in the UK in one of the relevant professions, and have at least 3 years of appropriate professional experience, then you are certainly eligible to apply.

When can I enter the programme ? When would I finish ?

Entry is at the beginning of each academic year in September, and the study days are usually the last Thursday and Friday of each month during term-time. The programme will normally be completed in four years, staying with the same cohort, but if necessary up to six years can be taken for completion. Suspension of studies, due to illness or other disruption, is normally permitted for up to a year at a time.

How do I apply ?

Informal discussion prior to application is very much encouraged. To arrange such a meeting, or for further information, please contact the Programme Leader, Dr Graham Stew on 01273 643469 or email : g.stew@bton.ac.uk. An application pack can be obtained from Jane Ingles in the Clinical Research Centre on 01273 643647 or J.Ingles@bton.ac.uk