

MSc Mental Health and Substance Use (Dual Diagnosis) Overview and Guide to the Programme

This guide aims to give you an overview of the course, provide information about both the core and optional modules and help navigate you through the possible pathways so you can make choices that best suit your interests and circumstances. In making your decision, you need think carefully about your career aspirations and choose modules that can support these ambitions.

The basics

The MSc Mental Health and Substance Use (Dual Diagnosis) is a part-time, distance-learning course which is delivered on-line via the Middlesex university learning platform MyUniHub. All the materials are accessed via MyUniHub and teaching will be a combination of guided reading and related activities, video lectures, power point presentations, online discussion forums and workshops. You will need good internet access to enable you to access materials, participate in online workshops and engage with discussion forums. Whilst the programme can be completed entirely by distance learning, there are three *optional* skills based modules which are delivered on the Hendon campus and these require attendance in person (see below for more information).

Students are combining study with working within the mental health and substance use field and come from a range of professional backgrounds (e.g. nursing, social care, housing, criminal justice system) and work in a variety of settings (e.g. hospitals, prisons, homeless hostels, community based services). Thus, students bring a variety of experience, interests and ambitions, so the programme has been developed to allow students to tailor the course to their own developmental needs and interests. There are four modules that all students must complete (known as core modules) and then students choose three optional modules (one in Year 1 and two in Year 2) from a range of different modules. The exact optional modules available will depend on cohort numbers and it may not be possible to run all the modules every year. This means that depending on the options chosen there are several 'pathways' to the final Masters award. In order to help you make decisions about which options you might like to study, details of the modules, factors to consider when making your choice and examples of possible combinations are outlined below. We would recommend you think through alternative options in case it is not possible to run all the optional modules. All students will have an opportunity to discuss their options with the Programme Leader and students can contact Module Leaders if they have specific questions.

What modules do all students study?

In Year 1, all students take two core modules: MHR4500 Critical Approaches to Dual Diagnosis (15 credits, Level 7) and MHR4622 Assessment and Treatment in Dual Diagnosis (30 credits, Level 7). These two modules provide the foundation of the Masters from which students will build upon as their studies progress. These are delivered by distance education.

In Year 2 all students will take the Advanced Practitioner Inquiry (WBH4630 credits, Level 7) and once successfully completed take the Advanced Work Based Project (WBH4760 60 credits, Level 7). This is the research element of the Masters programme. The Advanced Practitioner Inquiry focuses on, research methods and skills and students develop a proposal to undertake a piece of applied research which is relevant to their own work and the organisation they work for. The Advanced Work Based Project module involves students undertaking their work-based project and all students will have an individual supervisor to support them. Students submit a detailed project report for assessment and make a short presentation about their project (in person or via Skype/video link). Students must have completed the Advanced Practitioner Inquiry (WBH 4630) before they begin Advanced Work Based Project module (WBH 4760). These are delivered by distance education.

How may optional modules do students take?

Students take THREE optional modules in total and all the optional modules are 15 credits (Level 7). In Year 1 students chose ONE optional module (15 credits) and in Year 2 students choose TWO optional modules (30 credits in total – 15 credits each). There are eight optional modules in total and all the optional modules are offered in Year 1 and Year 2 (as long as cohort numbers allow).

Which optional modules are delivered by distance learning?

Five of the optional modules are delivered entirely by distance learning:

- Substance Use and Addiction Theories (CRM4501)
- Older People and Problematic Drug Use (MHR4501)
- Drugs and Crime (CRM4500)
- Leadership for Public and Community Services (NSA4100)
- Service Development and Quality Improvement (NSA4200)

Which optional modules require attendance at the Hendon campus?

Three of the optional modules require attendance at Hendon campus as they are practice/skills based. They are delivered as study days but exact timing varies for each module and may be spread over several months:

- Physical Assessment Skills for Mental Health Professionals (MHR4707)
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (MHR4604)
- Motivational Interviewing: Strategies for lifestyle and behavioural changes (MHR4502)

Choosing your options: developing your career

Your choice of options will depend on your educational and professional qualifications, your current role, interests and career ambitions. We suggest that you spend some time thinking about how you see your career developing, what job/role you are aiming for in the future and investigate what modules might assist you in achieving that ambition (e.g. look at job descriptions to see what qualifications, experience is required and talk to people in those roles).

For example, whilst all roles require leadership skills, for those wishing to pursue a management pathway, it would be worth considering either one or both of leadership modules (Leadership for Public and Community Services NSA4100; Service development and quality improvement NSA4200). If you are interested in becoming a nurse prescriber then you should think about doing the Physical Assessment Skills for Mental Health Professionals (MHR4707) optional module. This module equips students with the knowledge and skills to assess the physical health of people with mental health conditions, which is central to the practice of a nurse prescriber. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Interviewing (MI) are key psychological interventions used in mental health and substance use fields. For those wishing to strengthen their therapeutic and advanced communication skills there are modules on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (MHR4604) and Motivational Interviewing: Strategies for lifestyle and behavioural changes (MHR4502). This is not an exhaustive list, rather it is intended to get you thinking about how to tailor the programme to best meet your personal goals.

Choosing your options: distance learning options or campus based?

Figure 1 (see below) sets out the possible pathways that students can follow and the key questions that students need to ask themselves when making decisions. For some students' geographical distance and or family/work commitments means that they want to study entirely by distance. Others may be able to attend Hendon for study days to enable them to take the skills-based modules (CBT, MI: Strategies for lifestyle and behavioural changes, Physical Assessment Skills for Mental Health Professionals) if there are of interest. The dates for the study days are published before the start of the academic year. Students can apply to their employer for study leave and/or days off, but if these requests are not granted (or only in part) students need to consider whether they are prepared to take annual leave in order to take the module. Students may decide to take campus modules in Year 1 but none in Year 2 (or vice versa) or they can take them in both Years.

The Advanced Practitioner Inquiry and Advanced Work Based Project (core modules in Year 2) includes a series of workshops which are delivered both on Hendon campus and on-line (using Adobe connect) for those studying by distance education. The proceedings workshops are also recorded so that students can access them at a later date.

To enable us to provide a wider range of optional modules to students, these optional modules may be offered to students following a variety of Post Graduate (PG) programmes. This means that MSc Mental Health and Substance Use (Dual Diagnosis) students will study alongside students following other PG programmes, primarily, nursing and mental health courses. All the campus based modules will involve students from a range of courses and we find that students often value this interaction. In addition, Advanced Practitioner Inquiry and Advanced Work Based Project (core modules) are taken by PG students following a variety of programmes which again, students have found useful and interesting.

Making decisions about options: information and discussion

The Programme Handbook contains outlines of all the optional modules, including how the module is assessed e.g. essay, presentation, exam. All students will have the opportunity to discuss their options with the Programme Leader before they make their final choice. To assist in this process we ask you to do some preparatory work in terms of thinking about your practice and your professional aspirations to enable you make choices which support your goals.

You are welcome to book an appointment to speak to the Programme Leader (by Skype/telephone). Please contact Dr Rachel Herring r.herring@mdx.ac.uk

Figure 1: MSc Mental Health and Substance Use (Dual Diagnosis): Pathways

What are my career goals? What modules would best help me achieve them?

