



# **The Paediatric Specialist Group of the BDA in Partnership with the University of Plymouth**

## **Paediatric Dietetics - A modular course for dietitians & MSc Advanced Professional Practice (APP) in Paediatric Dietetics**

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## INTRODUCTION

The BDA paediatric modules have been designed for qualified dietitians to allow them to build on their existing knowledge of paediatric nutrition and dietetics and to reflect on the current healthcare and educational needs of dietitians working in the UK and beyond. The modules provide a progressive path through paediatric training with the modular format allowing flexibility for dietitians who have differing levels of experience, whether working in primary care, community, or the acute setting. For example, a paediatric community dietitian may choose to attend modules 1, 2 and 3 whereas a dietitian with an aspiration to work at a tertiary level may wish to attend all 5 modules. Experienced paediatric dietitians may take modules 3, 4 and 5 as a means of updating and enhancing their scientific knowledge base. Dietitians will be attending a course that is endorsed by the British Dietetic Association and that is recognised and valued by healthcare institutions.

### Why study with us?

Both BDA Paediatric Tutors and the School of Health Professions have exceptional international and national research reputations. BDA Paediatric Tutors are highly experienced specialist paediatric dietitians who will support your learning and development. The MSc APP in Paediatric Dietetics programme is very well established and has helped many paediatric dietitians move forward with their careers. The school offers an inter-professional environment in which to study, reflecting the diverse professions who study with us.

### Study routes

1. Stand-alone short course

2. MSc APP Paediatric Dietetics

3. MSc credit accumulation

#### 1. Stand Alone Short Courses

The BDA paediatric modules can be taken as stand-alone short courses (attendance only route). Each module is delivered as either a 2 x 2-day on-line or a hybrid model of 2 days on-line followed by two days face to face teaching blocks. Paediatric dietitians may take a single module, or they may progress through all five modules depending on their learning needs. They are all practical in nature and learning is achieved through lectures, workshops, case study presentations, problem solving and informal discussion groups. The course is endorsed by the BDA for 80 learning hours per module for continuous professional development (CPD). Learning hours will only be awarded to students who complete the pre-course work (reading and self-assessment) and attend the full 4 day taught component.

#### 2. MSc Advanced Professional Practice in Paediatric Dietetics

The MSc programme is hosted by the School of Health Professions within the Faculty of Health at the University of Plymouth. The programme focuses on the development of advanced skills in clinical reasoning, critical appraisal, problem solving, leadership, clinical skills, and research to enable you to progress and make meaningful changes to your practice. It is designed to help you advance your career in enhanced clinical practice, as a manager or an academic and helps lay the foundations for doctoral study should you wish. The course is flexible and offered for 1 year on a full-time basis or 5 years on a part time study basis. The blended learning approach – using small blocks of attended teaching with distance learning – enabling busy professionals to fit their studies around work commitments and to attend from a distance.

Master's students do the same pre-course work (reading and self-assessment) and 4 day taught component as the students attending as a stand-alone short course route. However, they undertake a **rigorous** post-course assessment (4000-word assignment) within the allocated time frame. Further details are provided once students are allocated a place. Each BDA paediatric module (pathway module) is worth 20 MSc credits. Students undertake additional core modules and optional modules hosted by the University of Plymouth to complete their MSc pathway (See Fig. 1).

### **3. MSc Credit Accumulation**

The BDA paediatric modules can be taken at MSc level for students wishing to accumulate credits. You may have MSc level credits from another institution that you want to add these to. Each BDA paediatric module undertaken at level 7 is worth 20 MSc credits.

#### **MSc Credit accumulation for Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) portfolio route**

ACP roles are exciting developments in the progression of the profession of dietetics. An ACP is an experienced, registered health care practitioner who has a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making. All of this is underpinned by an MSc degree or equivalent and encompasses four pillars of clinical practice. Additionally, the practitioner can manage clinical care in partnership with individuals, families, and carers; and analyse and synthesise complex problems across a range of settings, often resulting in innovative solutions enhancing outcomes and patient experience.

#### **The four pillars which underpin ACP practice are:**

1. Clinical Practice
2. Leadership and Management
3. Education
4. Research

Our MSc APP Paediatric Dietetics can support you to map against these four pillars in your portfolio. ADV774 'Contemporary Leadership' is essential to meet the leadership pillar and students should elect to do this as their optional module on the MSc APP programme. **Please liaise with Lisa Cooke or programme lead (paeddiet@plymouth.ac.uk) to discuss your module choices to underpin these pillars.**

### **BDA PAEDIATRIC MODULES**

#### **Aims of BDA Paediatrics Modules**

- To provide a planned programme which complements the skills of the Registered Dietitian, providing additional expertise necessary for advanced, evidence-based practice in the field of paediatric dietetics
- To enable students to apply theoretical knowledge and practical skills to an increasingly complex caseload in order to provide the most appropriate advice for infants (including preterm infants), children and adolescents
- To develop students' ability to analyse, interpret and synthesise new and emerging scientific knowledge in the field of paediatric nutrition and dietetics
- To give students confidence in handling a variety of paediatric cases of increasing complexity as they progress through the five modules
- To encourage effective communication of paediatric dietetics to patients, healthcare professionals and other groups
- To support students to critically analyse and interpret their own work to advance their practice

## Summary Learning outcomes of BDA Paediatric Modules

On successful completion of the modules, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an extended knowledge of nutritional principles, growth, feeding, nutrient requirements and nutritional assessment in the field of paediatric dietetics
- Demonstrate an appreciation of how psychosocial, financial, and cultural factors affect families and children, and the importance of the multidisciplinary team in their management
- Apply and synthesise theoretical knowledge to recommend the most appropriate and current dietary regimens for normal infants, children, and adolescents, and those with particular needs, such as over- and undernutrition and clinical conditions requiring a dietetic input
- Communicate their nutritional knowledge to groups or individuals and evaluate outcomes
- Critically evaluate new scientific and other evidence which may impact on dietetic practice

## Outline module content

### ADV785DL: Nutrition and Dietetics in Infancy and Childhood (Module 1)

- Growth and nutritional requirements from infancy to adolescence
- Infant feeding – breast, formula, complementary feeding (weaning)
- Problems in the early years of life
- Faltering growth, obesity, and food allergy (in particular cow's milk protein allergy CMPA)
- Techniques for energy and nutrient supplementation
- Socio-economic impacts on achieving adequate nutrition

### ADV786DL: Nutrition and Dietetics in Common Paediatric Disorders (Module 2)

- Nutritional needs and management of the premature infant
- Acute and community nutrition support (tube feeding, blended diets, and parenteral nutrition)
- Neurological impairments, feeding difficulties, eating disorders
- Gastroenterology (e.g., coeliac disease, inflammatory bowel disease, irritable bowel syndrome, and eosinophilic disease), and nutritional management including use of specialised formulas, dietary supplements and food-based treatments including the FODMAP diet
- Cystic fibrosis; diabetes mellitus; haematology & oncology

### ADV787: Clinical Dietetics for Infants and Children (Module 3)

- Neonatal surgery (atresias, abdominal wall defects, necrotising enterocolitis)
- Gastroenterology (disorders of fat and carbohydrate malabsorption, motility disorders, prevention of nutrition related complications in long term gastroenterological conditions)
- Trauma, thermal injury, critical care, parenteral nutrition
- Renal diseases (acute and chronic, nephrotic syndromes); liver disease (acute and chronic)
- Ketogenic diets (classical, MCT, modified Atkins)
- Congenital heart disease; hyperinsulinism and ketotic hypoglycaemia

### ADV784: Dietetic Management of Inherited Metabolic Disorders (Module 4)

- Disorders of protein metabolism (PKU, MSUD, homocystinuria, tyrosinaemia, organic acidaemias, urea cycle disorders)
- Disorders of carbohydrate metabolism (galactosaemia, glycogen storage diseases)
- Fatty acid oxidation disorders, hypolipoproteinaemias, hyperlipoproteinaemias
- Emergency regimens
- Feeding problems, adherence, and education

**ADV788: Neonatal Nutrition (Module 5)**

- Management of complex neonatal nutritional problems (necrotising enterocolitis, gastrointestinal surgery, intestinal failure associated liver disease)
- Parenteral nutrition, gut priming, enteral nutrition
- Lactation, breastfeeding, donor breastmilk, formulas, and fortifiers
- Post discharge nutrition; introduction of solid foods
- Catch-up growth and effect of early nutrition on later health

**COST PER BDA MODULE (MSc LEVEL AND STAND-ALONE SHORT COURSE)**

The below courses include tuition, workshops, and tutorial sessions of the relevant module only.

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 5
Paediatric Specialist Group Member - £930	Paediatric Specialist Group Member - £930	Paediatric Specialist Group Member £980	Paediatric Specialist Group Member £980
BDA Member - £955	BDA Member - £955	BDA Member £1005	BDA Member £1005
Non Member - £1030	Non Member - £1030	Non Member £1080	Non Member £1080

The fee for each BDA paediatric module is the same, whether you choose to take the module as a stand-alone short course option (BDA certificate) or enrol with the University of Plymouth for 20 MSc level credits.

**Table 1. DATES OF BDA MODULES:**

(N.B. STUDENTS SHOULD CHECK DLE FOR CONFIRMED HAND-IN DATES)

Module	Module Code	Attendance Dates	Location	Hand-in Date (provisional)
<b>2025/2026</b>				
<b>1</b>	ADV785DL	Part 1, 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 and Part 2, 10 <sup>th</sup> and 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Online distance learning	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
<b>2</b>	ADV786DL	Part 1, 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> March (online) and Part 2 24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2026 (online)	Online distance learning	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
<b>3</b>	ADV787	Part 1, 16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> June (online) and Part 2 29 <sup>th</sup> and 30 <sup>th</sup> June (in person).	Hybrid F2F (BDA part 2) and online distance learning	17 <sup>th</sup> August 2026
<b>5</b>	ADV788	Part 1, 24 <sup>th</sup> and 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2026 and Part 2, 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2026	Hybrid F2F (BDA part 2) and online distance learning	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2026

**MODULE DELIVERY FORMAT**

The BDA paediatric modules were delivered virtually using MS Teams in response to the covid pandemic. Our module teams have worked tirelessly to make the transition online, facilitating the traditional lecture sessions and group workshops. Module feedback from students has been positive.

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Students have appreciated the time and cost savings from not having to travel or book accommodation for online attendance. Therefore, modules will be delivered hybrid, as detailed in Table 1 henceforward.

## **APPLY TO ATTEND A BDA PAEDIATRIC MODULE**

Modules are advertised on the BDA website. Allocation of places are on a 'first come, first served' basis. Register online <https://www.bda.uk.com/specialist-groups-and-branches/paediatric-specialist-group/education.html> and sign up to the mailing list

For further details regarding the application process contact [sgevents@bda.uk.com](mailto:sgevents@bda.uk.com)

For further information regarding BDA module content (MSc level or CPD option) contact: **Lisa Cooke**, Education Officer and APP Masters clinical lead, Paediatric Specialist Group  
[Lisa.Cooke@uhbw.nhs.uk](mailto:Lisa.Cooke@uhbw.nhs.uk)

## **MSc APP PAEDIATRIC DIETETICS**

### **Admission Requirements**

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept applications from overseas students for this programme as it does not comply with the current Tier 4 visa requirements. Applicants will normally have an in-depth knowledge of nutrition and dietetics to honours degree level (or European first cycle equivalent) and evidence of relevant previous experience in nutrition and dietetics is required. Paediatric experience is essential to support your learning and development. Students must be Registered Dietitians with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to obtain the award of MSc APP in Paediatric Dietetics.

Please note: successful completion of this pathway does not lead to eligibility to apply for registration as a dietitian with the UK Health and Social Care Professions Council.

### **Applying for the MSc Programme**

We accept applications for part time study all year around. Students often apply to join the programme when they undertake their first BDA paediatric module. However, we recommend you carefully consider whether you are ready to study at master's level before registering. We strongly recommend students undertake 'ADV702 Applying Evidence to Practice' early in their studies to gain an understanding of research principles. This runs in September each year. We also recommend students undertake this [course](#) to develop academic writing skills required for level 7 study.

Further information about the programme can be accessed here  
<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/msc-advanced-professional-practice-in-paediatric-dietetics>

Programme Application forms can be accessed here; 2 references, a CV and confirmation of past qualifications is required.

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-us/university-structure/faculties/health/cpd/professional-development-unit-admissions>

Please return your application to the Professional Development Unit:  
[pduadmissions@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pduadmissions@plymouth.ac.uk)

Contact [paeddiet@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:paeddiet@plymouth.ac.uk) with any questions regarding the content of the programme or the **PDU admissions team** with any queries relating to application and administration. Dietitians wishing

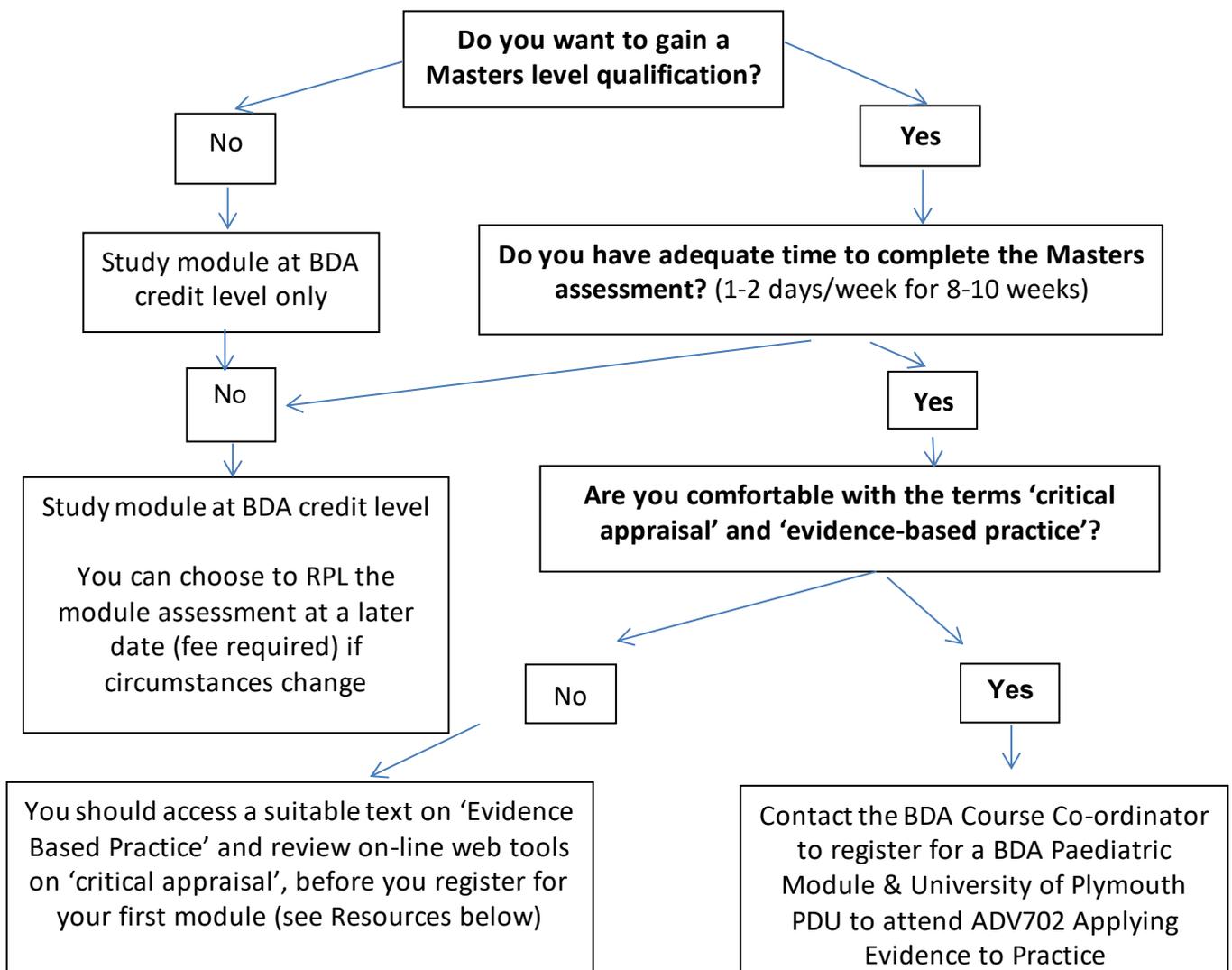
to commence part time study with a BDA paediatric module should contact the **BDA Course Co-ordinator** to register. When you register for your first BDA Masters module you can also complete the process for registration onto the part time MSc Advanced Professional Practice Paediatric Dietetics pathway.

**ARE YOU READY TO STUDY AT MSc LEVEL?**

All students who choose to study a BDA Paediatric Module as a stand-alone MSc module or as part of the MSc programme are advised to refresh their understanding, knowledge and skill in evidence-based practice and critical appraisal. The BDA Paediatric Module MSc assessments are essentially assessing your ability to work as an enhanced practitioner, by exploring and applying both best practice and current research evidence to the practice setting. If you are unsure of your ability in this field or would simply like to update your skills and gain confidence before you start, you will find suitable textbooks and websites listed below under **Resources**.

Induction material, including podcasts giving guidance on study at MSc level are available on the University of Plymouth MSc Advanced Professional Practice Moodle page. These are available following registration onto the programme with University of Plymouth log-in details.

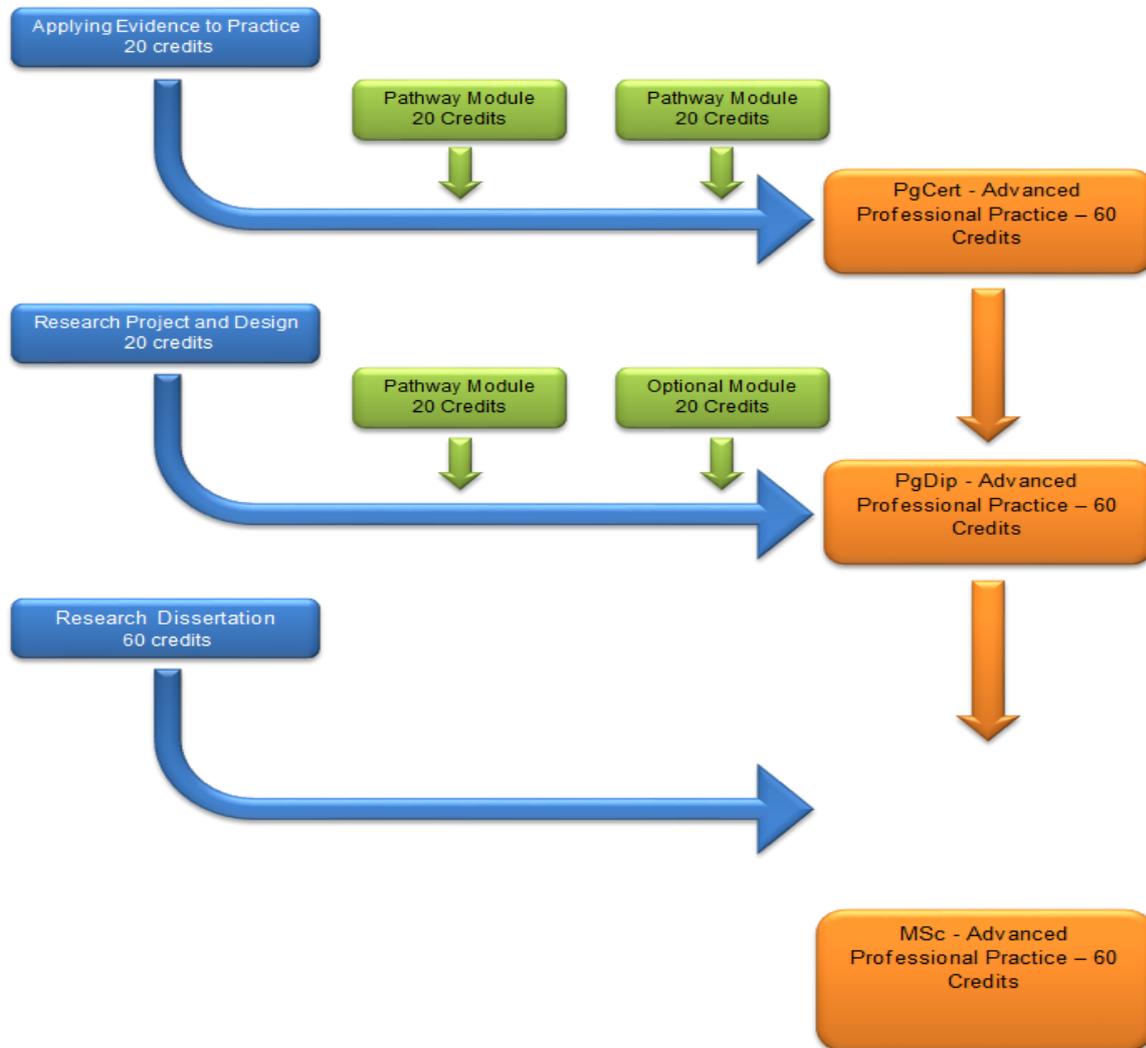
**Figure 2. Follow the pathway below to assess whether you are ready to study at master's level**



**Fig 1. MSc ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN PAEDIATRIC DIETETICS**

3 Core modules (blue)

3 pathway modules and 1 optional module (green)



Modules link together to form a PgCert, PgDip and MSc. Each stage of the degree requires 60 credits to progress. There are three points at which you can leave the degree – after 60 credits, 120 credits and 180 credits.

**Table 2. SAMPLE STRUCTURE OF THE MSc APP IN PAEDIATRIC DIETETICS**

<b>PgCert</b>  <b>60 credits</b>	Welcome, Induction and Resources to support MSc level study skills (not credit rated, self-directed so available all year round)
	* ADV702 Applying Evidence to Practice
	ADV785DL Nutrition and Dietetics in Infancy and Childhood
	ADV786DL Nutrition & Dietetics in Common Paediatric Disorders
<b>PgDip</b>  <b>120 credits</b>	ADV787 Clinical Dietetics for Infants and Children
	§ADV774 Contemporary Leadership or ADV749 Dietetic Practice: Supported Study or a fourth BDA paediatric module or choose from other #optional modules
	ADV715 Project Design for Research
	ADV716 Research Dissertation
<b>MSc 180 credits</b>	ADV716 Research Dissertation

**Welcome, Induction and Resources block**

There is no fee for this block, it is optional and self-directed. It will guide you through the resources available to you as a student at the University of Plymouth.

**Pathway specific modules – Paediatric**

Students with limited experience of paediatric dietetics are advised to do ADV785DL and/or ADV786DL first:

- ADV785DL Nutrition and Dietetics in Infancy and Childhood
- ADV786DL Nutrition and Dietetics in Common Paediatric Disorders
- ADV787 Clinical Dietetics for Infants and Children
- ADV784 Dietetic Management of Inherited Metabolic Disorders
- ADV788 Neonatal Nutrition

**Core Modules - University of Plymouth**

- \*ADV702 & ADV702Z (Distance) Applying Evidence to Practice
- ADV715 Project Design for Research
- ADV716 Research Dissertation

\* Students are encouraged to complete ADV702 Applying Evidence to Practice as **early as possible in their pathway ideally in year 1. This runs in September every year.** This module supports the development of literature searching, critical appraisal and academic writing skills, which will support students' ability to succeed in their BDA Paediatric Modules and other academic modules. Student feedback highlights that this module has boosted their confidence in their ability to undertake these key skills at MSc level, particularly when it has been a while since they were last at university and studying formally.

### **Optional Modules - University of Plymouth**

- ADV774 Contemporary Leadership (2 x 2 taught days)
- ADV749 Dietetic Practice: Supported Study (via distance learning)
- #A range of other optional modules

§ We strongly recommend you complete ADV764 Leading Professionals; Managing Aspirations for Self and Others to support your career development in management and leadership. This will be essential if considering Advanced Clinical practitioner (ACP) roles in the future.

# Other optional modules include:

- ADV760 Participation for Children and Young People
- HNUT705 Public Health Nutrition
- MCR706 Systematic Review
- ADV735 Advancing the Management of Long-Term Conditions
- ADV766 Innovation in an Ever-Changing Marketplace – Entrepreneurship for Health and Social Care Professionals

Part time students can choose to complete the pathway, core and optional modules in any order but must achieve 60 credits before enrolling on Project Design for Research (ADV715).

### **COST OF UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH MODULES (i.e. core modules)**

Modules beginning before August 2026: £1,260

Modules beginning in September 2026: £1,300

### **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL PROCESS)**

If you have achieved certificated learning with another higher education institution, you may be able to accredit this into one of our masters' programmes. You'll need to provide a copy of your relevant certificate and/or transcript, and any information on the learning outcomes and/or assessment criteria.

We'll compare what has already been learned with what would be studied on the course or programme for which you are claiming credit. This will show whether the learning on each course or programme is identical or sufficiently similar to enable you to claim that you have already achieved the learning outcomes. If it is, we'll award you the relevant modules and credits. experiential learning acquired in paid work

The process of making an RPL claim is formal. Your RPL claim will be scrutinised by the appropriate academic and external examiner and submitted to a Subject Assessment Panel and Award Board. This will result in your receipt of a transcript of learning, which clearly identifies the modules and credits awarded.

The preference is for your last 20 credits or close to the end of your degree. By then hopefully you are comfortable with academic assignments and are also able to be a more autonomous learner. We do **NOT** recommend this scheme as the first 20 credits of a degree or masters and prefer these events to be no older than 2 to 3 years

**Please note:** Making an RPL claim may take time and be as demanding as completing the module of study for which credit is being claimed.

Further information about the process is available here: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/about-university-structure/faculties/health/cpd/accreditation-of-prior-learning>

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Please direct initial enquiries to [pdu@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pdu@plymouth.ac.uk)

### **Upgrading BDA Credits to MSc Credits**

Paediatric dietitians who attended BDA Paediatric Specialist Group validated courses within the previous five years and chose not to complete the MSc assessment (4000-word assignment), can apply to convert their award to MSc credits through the University RPL process. This will necessitate:

- submission of a completed RPL form
- a certificate of the BDA award
- CV and evidence of relevant work in the field
- Successful achievement of the same master's level summative assessment as those completing the current equivalent taught module.

The student will be set a hand in date in line with the next running of the module. The **2026 RPL cost for 20 credit module:** £630 (before September), £650 (between September 2026 and August 2027). There is a yearly update each academic year. A maximum of 2 BDA modules can be completed by RPL, one each for PgCert and PgDip/MSc. For further information contact PDU [pduadmissions@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:pduadmissions@plymouth.ac.uk)

## **UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH MODULES**

### **Delivery**

In 2025/26 core and optional modules will be delivered in a blended fashion with some in person and virtual delivery. Virtual sessions will be delivered live. Many have distance delivery options negating the need to travel to Plymouth.

### **Core Modules: Please check the university website for dates of next module.**

These modules are inter-professional, common to all the pathways and required for the MSc.

#### **ADV702 Applying Evidence to Practice** *(Taught face-face 2 x 2 days, or via distance learning)*

This module is aimed at the application of evidence-based practice (EBP) to professional practice. Students will learn how to use research to guide best practice. They will identify a question relevant to their area of practice, review and critique the literature in the area, plan and evaluate any necessary change to professional practice.

#### **ADV715 Project Design for Research** *(Taught face-face 1x 2 day and 1 x 3 days or distance learning)*

Students will explore methodology and methods relevant to the development of a research project and by the end of the module will formulate a research proposal. The module will explore defining and refining a research question, selecting, and appraising methodology, ethical considerations, selecting and appraising data collection and analysis techniques.

#### **ADV716 Research Dissertation** *(face-face, webinar and distance learning)*

Over the course of the module students will complete their dissertation as part of their Advanced Professional Practice MSc programme under supervision from the module team and a named dissertation supervisor.

### **2025-26 COST FOR UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH MODULES:**

Please follow the link below to access current information on fees:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/study/cpd/professional-development-module-fees>

**ASSESSMENT:** All modules will be assessed using standard MSc level criteria

### **Formative Assessment (not graded)**

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- BDA pathway modules: self-assessment questions and a portfolio of learning experience, including competencies acquired during the module
- Core & optional modules: bullet point outline of essay plan and a paragraph of text for feedback re critical appraisal.
- Formative presentations of planned research in ADV715 and ADV716.

### **Summative Assessment (graded) (100%)**

Students will submit a 4000-word evidence-based report using a case study of their choosing, that is related to a topic covered on the module. The submission will be informed by critical appraisal of available evidence and on best practice. See individual module handbooks for detailed guidance on the module assessment. These will be available on the Moodle DLE page when registered. The deadline date for submission of the MSc assessment varies. Students must pass the summative assessment with a pass mark of 50%.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Suggested texts**

Bolton, G. & Denderfield, R. (2018) *Reflective practice: writing and professional development*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn. Sage Publications.

Greenhalgh, T. (2010) *How to read a paper: the basics of evidence-based medicine*. 6<sup>th</sup> edn. John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Newell, R. & Burnard, P. (2011) *Research for evidence-based practice in healthcare*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Rose, J. (2012) *The mature student's guide to writing*. Palgrave, Macmillan.

Thompson, S. & Thompson, N. (2008) *The Critically reflective practitioner*. Palgrave, Macmillan.

Williams, K., Wooliams, M. & Spiro, J. (2012) *Reflective writing: a pocket study skills*. Palgrave, Macmillan.

### **e-books**

Garrett, L. K., Clarke, A. & Shihab, P. (2011) *Skills for nursing and healthcare students: study skills, maths, and science*. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Glasziou, P., Del Mar, C. & Salisbury, J. (2007) *Evidence-based practice workbook: bridging the gap between health care research and practice*. Oxford: Blackwell.

### **Suggested websites**

Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) <http://www.casp-uk.net/>

International Centre for Allied Health Evidence (iCAHE) <http://www.unisa.edu.au/cahe/default.asp>

NHS Evidence <http://www.evidence.nhs.uk/default.aspx>

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) <http://www.nice.org.uk/>

Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) <http://www.sign.ac.uk/>

The Cochrane Library <http://www.thecochranelibrary.com/view/0/index.html>