[.](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/postgraduate-open-days)

Palliative Medicine/Palliative Care(MSc/PgDip)

n/a (**full-time**) / n/a (**part-time**) / 3 years (part-time) (**distance / e-Learning**)

Course Aims

The vision of the Cardiff University postgraduate palliative care education team is to improve patient care by delivering accessible education.

Cardiff University offers two levels of qualification in Palliative Care/Medicine. The courses have been specifically designed for the varying needs of practitioners working in differing clinical settings across the globe.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Palliative Medicine/Care is designed for professionals who wish to gain expertise in the practical management of patients with non-curable and terminal illness, and emphasises the unique contribution made by each discipline involved in palliative care. The principles of reflective practice and learning underpin the Diploma. A major aim in the teaching programme is to encourage thought and discussion and equip students with practical and factual knowledge, and also provide an evidence-based approach to problems in palliative care. The attitudes and abilities acquired should be of lasting value long beyond specific advances in therapy and management.

The MSc in Palliative Medicine/Care draws on the knowledge and skill-base developed in the Postgraduate Diploma, with the specific intention of expanding students’ understanding of scientific method / research and critical appraisal. The principles of learning through reflective practice remain relevant, and the MSc reinforces this self-directed approach with appropriate tutor and supervisor support.

Special Features

* The Diploma was the first of its kind in the world and has been running successfully since 1989, producing over 1,000 graduates working in all regions of the world.
* On graduation, students should be able to enhance the clinical service delivered to patients by positively influencing behaviour in their working environment and by acting as local facilitator for further educational and research developments in palliative medicine/care.

Course Description

There are 2 pathways available:

**The Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Palliative Medicine (open to doctors)**

The Postgraduate Diploma/MSc in Palliative Care (open to appropriate non-medical healthcare professionals).

The 2 pathways overlap in many ways. Teaching for both Diplomas is designed to be multidisciplinary in nature and many of the modules are available to all students.

The Diploma Stage

The Postgraduate Diplomas offer students the option to study palliative medicine/care in either adults or children. Students choosing the full paediatric option should be working in paediatrics and are encouraged to choose the 3 paediatric modules as their optional modules and tailor their assignments to paediatric practice.

The Postgraduate Diplomas are designed for professionals who wish to gain expertise in the practical management of patients with incurable and terminal illness. The programme content is also designed to emphasise the unique contribution made by each discipline involved in palliative care. Students are self-funded or financially supported by their employers. The programme starts each September and is delivered over 2 academic years largely through distance/e- learning. The educational resources are accessed through a password-secure virtual learning environment available to students. Students correspond with tutors online, by email or telephone and submit their coursework electronically. This makes the course particularly suitable for healthcare professionals working in all regions of the world.

Each year of the Diploma has a 2-3 day compulsory contact session usually held in Cardiff in September which allows topical issues and communication skills to be discussed and practised in small groups. During group work students are expected to actively contribute to the group discussion/activity. Throughout the programme a holistic approach to patient care is adopted with an emphasis on reflective practice where the student is encouraged to consider all aspects of their patients’ care. Different topics in palliative care are studied through a series of relevant articles, available through the Internet, which are categorised as "recommended reading" as well as additional "themed reading". Students will be asked to identify key areas for their own learning from this resource and select the themed reading material that meets their learning needs as well as identifying their own resources

Core Modules cover: pain and symptom control; psychosocial care; understanding the evidence; ethics and law; Palliative Care service organisation and communication skills. Optional modules are available on topics including HIV and AIDS; end-stage cardiac disease; end stage respiratory disease; end stage renal disease; neurological conditions; oncology and haematology.

Diploma Assessment

Assessment consists of a mixture of formative and summative assessments which include extended match questions and written assignments. The written assignments include module assignments such as essays, the exploration of a critical incident, case reflections, audit and critique of out-of-hours care. All applicants must commence the diploma at year one, except in cases where there is accreditation of prior learning. We have a procedure for assessing applications for accreditation of prior learning (APL) in appropriate topics gained from recognised educational institutions but we are not currently in a position to recognise experiential learning. If you believe that you have completed a recognised programme of learning equivalent to one or more modules of the Diploma and wish to apply for an APL exemption, please contact us prior to your application.

The MSc Stage

Those who have successfully passed and completed the PgDip are eligible to either be awarded their Diploma or apply for a place on the MSc stage. The MSc module aims to develop core knowledge of research methods and measurement tools, and to enhance critical appraisal skills. Students are encouraged to use this knowledge to merge research practice with clinical experience through a process of critical evaluation and reflective practice. Learning will be evidenced by the students’ ability to effectively design, execute and report a methodologically sound research project. Students will be supported by the course Module Leader and a supervisor who has a knowledge of their topic/methodology who will act as a guide and support for the project.

Two contact sessions are offered to ensure that the student’s project is carefully planned and to provide students with core knowledge regarding research methodology and critical appraisal.

The first, 5-day, compulsory contact session takes place in September. It is designed to give a sound basic knowledge of both research methodologies and critical appraisal skills. Interactive and problem-based teaching techniques are employed to enhance the learning opportunities for both individuals and the group as a whole.

The second, 2-day, contact session is held later in the year and, although not compulsory, it is strongly recommended. This reviews the progress that students have made in completing data collection and provides support for writing up the dissertation, including the effective presentation of your data.

MSc Assessment

Assessment of the MSc is through a research dissertation which provides an opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the core objectives of the MSc by effectively addressing a relevant research question. This may be attained by performing either: -

* an original piece of qualitative or quantitative research, usually in your normal clinical practice; or
* a rigorous systematic review or meta-analysis of published literature relevant to the practice of palliative medicine or palliative care.

The dissertation forms the only summative assessment for this module. Successful completion, in conjunction with success at Postgraduate Diploma leads to the award of the MSc in Palliative Medicine/Care.

Available Modules

The Diploma course consists of core and optional modules

 Core Modules are:

* Palliative care introduction,
* Symptom control 1 and 2,
* Communication skills,
* Ethics and law,
* Palliative care service organisation and special groups/ advanced practice and palliative care service organisation,
* Information mastery,
* Psychosocial impact of life-limiting illness

Optional choices include:

* End stage cardiac disease,
* End stage respiratory disease,
* End stage neurological disease, fatigue and palliative rehabilitation,
* End stage renal disease,
* HIV/AIDS,
* Cancer specific palliative care,
* Principles of paediatric palliative care,
* Essentials of palliative care in oncology,
* Malignancy and emergency care in paediatric palliative care

At present no modules are available as a standalone option. They can only be taken as part of the 2-year diploma.

The Diploma course comprised of 120 credits at level 7, with the MSc requiring an additional 60 credits.

Contact Hours

Face-to-face contact required for 2-3 days in September for each year of the postgraduate diploma and a 5-day and 2-day face-to-face contact session for the Dissertation stage of the MSc.