

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1. Key Information

Programme Title:	MSc Community Healthcare Practice (Top-Up)
Awarding Institution:	Buckinghamshire New University
Teaching Institution(s):	Buckinghamshire New University
Subject Cluster:	Community Health & Primary Care
Award Title (including separate Pathway Award Titles where offered):	Master of Science in Community Healthcare Practice
Pathways (if applicable)	
FHEQ level of final award:	Level 7
Other award titles available (exit qualifications):	n/a
Accreditation details:	
Length of programme:	52 weeks
Mode(s) of Study:	Part-time
Mode of Delivery:	Distance learning
Language of study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark(s):	n/a
Other external reference points (e.g. Apprenticeship Standard):	n/a
Course Code(s):	MSCHCPDP
UCAS Code(s):	n/a
Approval date:	December 2025
Date of last update:	

2. Programme Summary

This programme has been developed to enable learners who have been awarded a PGDip in Specialist Community Public Health Nursing, or Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications, to gain the academic credits required to convert their award to a master's degree. It aims to equip learners with the essential knowledge and skills required to undertake an independent research project within the field of community healthcare. Learners will identify a topic of professional relevance, design and carry out a comprehensive investigation using an appropriate research methodology. Though primarily designed to meet the needs of Buckinghamshire New University Graduates, the programme is also open to students who have undertaken a commensurate programme externally. Potential applicants do not need to have completed a period of additional practice following completion of their PGDip

programmes prior to starting this MSc, though normally, they should be employed within a healthcare setting to facilitate application of the research to practice.

3. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

Programme Aims

This programme aims to:

1. Build students' skills in designing and undertaking research that is contextually relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of community healthcare practice.
2. Develop students' ability to critically analyse and synthesise literature to an advanced level, enabling the formulation of focused, evidence-informed research questions that address current challenges in community healthcare.
3. Enable students to apply ethical principles and governance frameworks when designing and implementing methodologically sound and contextually appropriate research.
4. Support students in conducting independent research that contributes new insights to the body of community healthcare knowledge, and in communicating findings effectively to influence practice, policy, or further research.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding (K)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
K1	Explain the principles and theoretical foundations that underpin research in community healthcare practice.
K2	Articulate advanced understanding of research methodologies and their application within community healthcare contexts.
K3	Critically evaluate theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence relevant to community nursing and public health practice.

Analysis and Criticality (C)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
C1	Formulate and justify a focused research question through critical engagement with current literature and practice-based issues.
C2	Apply critical thinking to assess the validity, reliability, and ethical implications of research designs and data sources.

Application and Practice (P)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
P1	Design and implement a methodologically sound and ethically robust research project that addresses a specific issue in community healthcare.
P2	Analyse and interpret data using appropriate tools and techniques, drawing meaningful conclusions that inform practice.
P3	Translate research findings into actionable recommendations that contribute to improvements in community healthcare delivery or policy.

Transferable skills and other attributes (T)

On successful completion of the programme, you will be able to:

ID	Learning Outcome
T1	Communicate complex research findings effectively to diverse audiences, including academic, professional, and community stakeholders.
T2	Demonstrate autonomy, initiative, and self-direction in managing an independent research project from conception to completion.
T3	Reflect critically on personal and professional development throughout the research process, identifying areas for future growth and impact.

Graduate Attributes

The BNU Graduate Attributes of: Knowledge and its application; Creativity; Social and ethical awareness and responsibility; and Leadership and self-development focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens.

On this programme, attributes are developed through:

- Engaging with advanced theoretical and methodological content relevant to community healthcare research, enabling the application of knowledge to real-world challenges and production of original research that informs evidence-based practice.
- Encouraging innovative thinking in the design and execution of research projects, supporting students to explore novel approaches to problem-solving, data interpretation, and dissemination of findings in both academic and professional contexts.
- Embedding ethical principles throughout the learning experience, requiring students to consider the implications of their research on individuals, communities, and healthcare systems, and promoting socially responsible and ethically informed practice.
- Fostering autonomy, self-direction, and resilience via a distance learning model, enabling students to manage their own learning journey while developing transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, and project management that prepare them to lead change and contribute meaningfully to their professional field.

4. Entry Requirements

The University's [general entry requirements](#) will apply to admission to this programme with the following additions / exceptions:

All applicants must, within the last 5 years, have been awarded a PGDip in Specialist Community Public Health Nursing or a PGDip in Specialist Practice Qualification.

Where a PGDip was awarded from another higher education institution, learners will receive an MSc award without classification upon successful completion of the programme.

5. Programme Structure

Level	Modules (Code, Title and Credits)	Exit Awards
Level 7	NAM7158 Independent Research Project (60 credits)	n/a

6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and teaching

The teaching and learning strategy for this programme is designed to meet the expectations of Level 7 study while supporting the needs of practitioners engaged in community healthcare across diverse settings. Delivered via distance learning, the programme enables flexible access to academic study, allowing students to engage with content and supervision regardless of location or work commitments. The strategy promotes student autonomy, critical engagement, and experiential learning, underpinned by reflective practice and scholarly inquiry.

Learning and teaching supports students in becoming independent researchers capable of contributing meaningfully to community healthcare practice. The programme draws on students' prior professional experience, encouraging them to integrate this with theoretical frameworks and evidence-based approaches.

Learning is structured to promote independent inquiry, critical reflection, and professional relevance, with a strong emphasis on integrating students' prior experience into academic exploration. The programme fosters a student-centred approach, encouraging learners to take ownership of their development while being supported through structured guidance and accessible resources.

A comprehensive Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) underpins the delivery of the programme, providing access to:

- Recorded lectures and seminars
- Interactive learning materials
- Discussion forums and peer collaboration spaces
- Student learning and achievement resources and contacts
- Assessment guidance and submission portals

The module begins with synchronous and asynchronous taught sessions, front-loaded to establish key concepts in research methodology, ethics, and academic expectations. These sessions are designed to be interactive and accessible, using tools such as video conferencing, breakout discussions, quizzes, and reflective tasks to engage learners actively.

Following the taught phase, learners will submit CW1, a proposal for either a primary or secondary research project. They will then transition into a supervised research phase, where they undertake an independent dissertation. Each student is allocated an academic supervisor who provides regular, structured support through virtual meetings, email correspondence, and feedback on draft work. Supervision is tailored to individual student needs and delivered in line with University guidelines with flexibility in scheduling to accommodate professional commitments. Feedback is continuous and developmental, supporting students in refining their work and deepening their critical engagement.

Students are encouraged to access additional support services, including the Student Learning and Achievement Team, Library Services, and academic skills workshops, which offer guidance on writing, referencing, and research techniques.

Assessment

Assessment is structured to support progressive development, with formative checkpoints throughout the programme. The summative submissions of a research proposal and an Independent Research Project represent a unique, original contribution to community healthcare knowledge, assessed against clear module specific assessment criteria.

Contact Hours

The programme comprises a total of 600 learning hours, including 36 hours of synchronous taught sessions, 6 hours of individual academic supervision, and 558 hours of guided independent study, which encompasses research activity, engagement with learning materials, and completion of assessment tasks.

7. Programme Regulations

This programme will be subject to the following assessment regulations:

- Regulations for Taught Degree Programmes (2023)

8. Support for learners

The following systems are in place to support you to be successful with your studies:

- The appointment of a personal tutor to support you through your programme
- A programme handbook and induction at the beginning of your studies
- Library resources, include access to books, journals and databases - many of which are available in electronic format – and support from trained library staff
- Access to Blackboard, our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is accessible via PC, laptop, tablet or mobile device
- Access to the MyBNU portal where you can access all University systems, information and news, record your attendance at sessions, and access your personalised timetable
- Academic Registry staff providing general guidance on University regulations, exams, and other aspects of students and course administration
- Central student services, including teams supporting academic skills development, career success, student finance, accommodation, chaplaincy, disability and counselling
- Support from the Bucks Students' Union, including the Students' Union Advice Centre which offers free and confidential advice on University processes.

9. Programme monitoring and review

BNU has several ways for monitoring and reviewing the quality of learning and teaching on your programme. You will be able to comment on the content of their programme via the following feedback mechanisms:

- Formal feedback questionnaires and anonymous module 'check-ins'
- Participation in external surveys
- Programme Committees, via appointed student representatives
- Informal feedback to your programme leader

Quality and standards on each programme are assured via the following mechanisms:

- An initial event to approve the programme for delivery
- An annual report submitted by the External Examiner following a process of external moderation of work submitted for assessment
- The Annual Monitoring process, which is overseen by the University's Quality Assurance Committee
- Review by the relevant PSRB(s)
- Other sector compliance and review mechanisms

10. Internal and external reference points

Design and development of this programme has been informed by the following internal and external reference points:

- The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- The PSRB Standards of Proficiency (SOP) for Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ) and Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN)
- The BNU Qualifications and Credit Framework
- The BNU Grading Descriptors
- The University Strategy, Impact 202

Mapping of Programme Learning Outcomes to Modules

Programme Learning Outcome	Knowledge and understanding (K)					Analysis and Criticality (C)					Application and Practice (P)					Transferable skills and other attributes (T)				
	K1	K2	K3			C1	C2				P1	P2	P3			T1	T2	T3		
Module Code (Core)																				
Level 7																				
NAM7158	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		