

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ENABLEMENT

POSTURE MANAGEMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX DISABILITIES

Post-Graduate Certificate 2026-27

Virtual meet and greet:	10 September 2026 @ 2.30pm
Block 1:	21-24 September 2026
Block 2:	02-04 November 2026
Block 3:	01-03 February 2027
Block 4 and viva exam:	12-15 April 2027

Rationale

The increasing numbers of people who are surviving with long term physical disability, and the severity and complexity of their physical conditions, highlight the need for additional expertise in the management of severe and complex postural presentations. This field is developing to provide the optimum quality of life for people with disabilities and their carers.

People have many difficulties when functional ability deteriorates. There is an on-going need to reduce or prevent the secondary complications that are frequently associated with loss of posture and motor control e.g. pressure sores and altered body shape. The cost and effort of care required to meet the needs of people in these situations is high. This course aims to provide professionals with the knowledge and expertise to manage the physical condition of a person with complex disability in a variety of environments, utilising a range of available resources as cost effectively as possible.

To address the posture needs of the client is as important as enabling function and mobility, and the problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle require more than the provision of seating. Posture for daily living throughout a 24-hour cycle should be holistically addressed and be appropriate to the social and environmental circumstances of all concerned. Attempting to resolve the range of difficulties presented, for example, inappropriate environments, stressed and anxious carers, acute crises and chronic problems, requires knowledge and skills of a high calibre. Those professionals acquiring the specialist knowledge and expertise that derives from the course should be equipped with the skills to train care personnel in posture management.

The expertise gained on this course will complement that offered by therapists, surgeons, orthotists, prosthetists, engineers, nurses and other specialists in the rehabilitation team for people with complex disabilities.

Scope

This is a Post-Graduate Certificate at Master of Science level (level 7), focusing on posture control, comprehensive assessment and physical management over 24 hours. It seeks to meet the need for specialist expertise through the in-depth study of posture and function, and the development of the requisite critical thinking to facilitate the objective review of evidence-based practice.

The course provides a foundation in biomechanics relevant to posture assessment for people lacking independent posture control. Postures under normal and pathological conditions are studied, including the development and cause of secondary complications. The principles underlying posture management are addressed. Strategies for the 24-hour management of postural deficits arising from neurological impairments are discussed and methods of facilitating sitting, lying and standing are explored. A holistic approach is made so that functional, social, environmental, physical and psychological aspects of disability are considered in 24-hour posture management strategies.

Students will have an opportunity to explore further interventions which facilitate the physical management of people who lack independent posture control and who have developed significant secondary complications. Such interventions include surgery, drug treatments and the use of specialised equipment. There are opportunities to examine and critically evaluate research in the field.

The unique selling points of the programme are:

- In addition to facilitating development of academic skills, the course provides a practical, clinical learning experience with adoption of learning into the workplace as is necessary to complete the written assignments
- The aim is to equip students with the knowledge and expertise to execute assessment and treatment of people with complex disability in relation to 24-hour posture management
- In the UK it is the only postgraduate certificate in posture management for people with complex disability
- It has evolved from the learning and teaching of Pauline Pope, one of the foremost pioneers of posture management in the country

Admission Regulations

Potential students for this course should have:

- (a) a degree/diploma in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, engineering, nursing, or equivalent
- OR (b) other European Community or overseas qualifications and experience deemed equivalent to the above
- OR (c) evidence of 120 credits at level 3 or equivalent in a health care related field of study
- AND (d) be working with severely physically disabled people routinely, and be in a setting which enables them to achieve the professional learning outcomes of the course; students will have access to appropriate clients i.e., children and/or adults with complex disabilities, and to appropriate assessment facilities
- AND (e) at least two years' experience of neurological conditions and people with complex disabilities: normally candidates will be expected to have a broad-based clinical experience in a variety of departments e.g., paediatric, older persons, neurology, orthopaedic

- AND (f) a statement of agreement from their manager to support them in their learning as part of continuing professional development in the workplace
- AND (g) be sufficiently physically fit to participate in practical group work and to undertake physical assessment of people with physical disability
- AND (h) if English is not the applicant's first language, have an English language qualification such as International English Language Testing Systems (IELTS) 6.5 or above

Prospective students are advised that they will be selected for inclusion to the course by the course team. Selection is informed by the details provided on the application form. The course team will review all applications. Interviews are routine but a strong supporting statement may mitigate the need for this. See application form for more information.

Duration

Nine months comprising four separate taught blocks, two of four days duration and two of three days duration and with intermediate study online, plus a viva examination at the end of the fourth block of study. The course must be completed within three years of commencement.

Learning

This will be an intensive course of study. Theoretical and applied learning during the taught blocks must be augmented by clinical practise in the workplace. In addition, participants will be expected to spend considerable time reading and undertaking written work. Self-directed learning is a critical aspect of the course.

Hours

The total number of hours of student effort required is 600hrs. Of this total 100 hours are spent in the four teaching blocks of the course, leaving 500 hours to be spent by the students over 9 months i.e., approximately 12 hours per week. A significant proportion of the latter will be taken up by practising the taught techniques and method in the workplace during the non-teaching weeks.

Self-directed study, course work and assessment

Students will be expected to complete the following work before and during the course. Assessment of the items in italics will contribute to the summative assessment of the course and accreditation of CATS points.

Pre-course	Reading On-line learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars
Between blocks 1 and 2	Practise of clinical skills with clients Reading On-line learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars
Between blocks 2 and 3	Practise of clinical skills with clients Reading

On-line learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars
Assignment I: First case study of a client

Between blocks 3 and 4

Practise of clinical skills with clients
Reading
On-line learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars
Assignment II: Critical appraisal of a scientific paper

After block 4

Practise of clinical skills with clients
Reading
On-line learning: recorded lectures, quizzes, seminars
Assignment III: Second case study of a client
Oral test

The course is accredited at 60 CATS points by Oxford Brookes University. It will also provide between 40 and 60 credits with other education providers, dependent upon its potential for integration with their course modules.

Number of students

Maximum 20. The course team reserves the right to decide the minimum number of students for whom the course will run.

Location Oxford Centre for Enablement
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre
Windmill Road
Headington
Oxford
OX3 7HE

Cost £2,500

Applications

Please following this link: <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/hls-direct-short-courses/> Note registration is required.

There is an embedded form for you to provide additional information and your manager's statement of support. We will communicate separately with you regarding funding but **within the Brookes portal you must select "self funding" when prompted** for the funding type because fees are collected by ourselves at the OCE, not by Brookes. This is an integral part of the process which is required to allow your application to progress. Once your application has been approved the Course Administrator from the Oxford Centre for Enablement will contact you to arrange payment of fees.

Queries about the application process may be directed to the Programme Administration Centre at the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences jkumar@brookes.ac.uk or alicemitchell@brookes.ac.uk Other enquiries should be directed to OCEcourseadmin@ouh.nhs.uk or 01865 227 879.