Is Physiotherapy for me?

This booklet forms part of the Informed Study Project. All information was correct at the time of publication.
Contents

Is Physiotherapy for me? 1
What are Lectures? 2
What about Tutorials? 3
What happens in Practical Sessions? 4
Are there any other types of session? 5
Will I be required to take part in independent / self study? 6
What is Placement Learning? 7
How is the programme assessed? 8
Useful Links & e-mails 9
Is Physiotherapy for me?

The great thing about studying on the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy at Cardiff University is that there is a wide range of activities that comprise the whole experience.

However this also means that we need to make sure you are clear on the physical and mental requirements of the programme so that you are able to make an informed decision on whether Physiotherapy is the right course for you.

This leaflet will provide you with as much information as possible about our exciting programme, hopefully by the end you will be able to self-assess whether you feel able to participate in the learning experiences of our programme.

If at any point you have questions about the nature of the course, or about your ability to partake, please contact the BSc (Hons) Physio Admissions team (Bendall@cardiff.ac.uk) who will direct you to the most appropriate person. They will be happy to discuss the requirements of the programme and to consider, with you, the adjustments you may potentially need to participate successfully.

What is Fitness to Practise?

One of the responsibilities of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a statutory regulator is to ensure that its members are fit to practise. You therefore need to be aware of exactly what fitness to practise means before you enrol on the programme (so you are ready to practise safely and effectively when you are qualified!).

Fitness to Practise means having the skills, knowledge and character to practise your profession safely and effectively http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/ftp/

What next?

Now that you are aware of some of the governance requirements, the following sections in this document will provide you with a snapshot overview of a range of activities and environments you would be required to participate in within the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy programme. We suggest that you take a few moments to read and absorb the information below and consequently consider your ability to fully engage with the programme. We hope you enjoy reading about the exciting opportunities the programme offers.
What are Lectures?

The purpose of a lecture is usually to present a new topic whilst incorporating student participation. Sometimes lectures are only with other physiotherapy students but on some occasions they are with other Healthcare students too. Where appropriate, presentations and any additional reading material are available on Learning Central* prior to the session. It is generally appropriate to print this off and read it before the session so further personal notes can be made as necessary.

Students will spend the majority of the session sitting and attending to the presentation, while taking notes about the information presented. Presentations are usually in sections of 20 – 25 minutes; between sections there may be opportunities for students to ask questions and also participate in directed discussions with other students.

Lectures are engaging… and although some of the content can be hard to get your head around if you need something clarifying there is always someone happy to help.

Laura, First Year Student

**Information on Lectures**

- **Duration**: Maximum of 3 hours, but with at least one 30 minute break
- **Number of students**: Approximately 120 to 300
- **Venue**: Tiered lecture theatre with fixed seating and benches
- **Teaching Style**: Information is presented within a spectrum of audio-visual delivery methods including lecture presentations using Microsoft Powerpoint and similar software, videos and sometimes involves patients coming in and discussing their condition.

**What is Learning Central?***

Learning Central is Cardiff University’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). This is a web-based application that supports online learning and teaching by providing access to learning resources and module announcements and allowing submission of assessments.
What about Tutorials?

When students commence the programme they are allocated to a tutorial group of approximately 15 students. Tutorials are usually discursive in nature and provide an opportunity for deeper learning of new or previously explored topics. They are also a good opportunity for students to ask questions they may not feel comfortable asking in a lecture format.

If the tutorial is related to a previous lecture, students need to prepare by reading the lecture notes prior to the tutorial.

I was apprehensive...about meeting so many new people but the small tutorial group structure meant I got to know those people first and then it was easy.
John, Second Year Student

Information on Tutorials

- **Duration**: Usually last for an hour followed by a break, but may last up to two hours.
- **Number of students**: Approximately 15 to 30 students (if a double tutorial).
- **Venue**: Small teaching rooms with moveable chairs and desks
- **Teaching Style**: Tutorials are generally of an interactive nature and have a wide range of formats but usually involve small group work e.g. groups of 6 – 8
What happens in Practical Sessions?

The purpose of a practical session is to put theory into practice, in order to develop the skills of actually doing the job. Students usually take it in turns to be in the role of the Physiotherapist and the patient; the latter may need to undress down to their shorts/underwear so that the student in the role of physiotherapist can see, feel or move the patient’s body. For instance, in learning how to perform a massage, it is necessary for the student in the role of Physiotherapist to be able to see the body part and apply Physiotherapeutic techniques for approximately 30 minutes in a standing position.

Initially I felt nervous about working practically with people I didn't know, however working in small groups during practicals and being made to practice techniques on different people really built my confidence.

Lilly, First Year Student

Information on Practicals

- **Duration**: May last up to a maximum of 3 hours, but are usually for an hour followed by a break
- **Number of students**: Usually double tutorial groups of approximately 30 students in total
- **Venue**: Practical rooms with moveable high-low plinths
- **Teaching Style**: Practical sessions may consist of demonstrations with opportunities to practice, or experiential learning (problem solving) followed by feedback and guidance. Students often work in pairs but change who they work with so they learn to apply techniques to different body types, and both males and females. Students are expected to give feedback to the person who is practising on them.

Professionalism in practical classes

The practical class environment aims to replicate the clinical environment and all students are therefore expected to present themselves in a professional manner. Professional presentation is fundamental in order to meet health and safety requirements, optimise infection control and promote patient confidence. Therefore students are expected to wear practical uniform and adhere to the professional appearance and uniform policy. This includes having long hair tied back, having short nails (with no polish), not wearing anything below the elbow, no jewellery (including body piercings) and respecting the dignity of other students at all times.
Are there any other types of session?

There is a range of other sessions within the programme where students are supported in achieving certain tasks. For example, in year one these include anatomy workshops using anatomical joint models and also visiting the dissection rooms in the anatomy department of the university.

In year two basic life support skills are taught by external organisations, and in year three students have workshops in the Research Centre for Clinical Kinesiology (RCCK)

I was worried about using the equipment for my dissertation, but I was shown how to use it, practised, and it all went smoothly – much to my relief!

Hoshi, Third Year Student

At first I was nervous about what I was going to see, but I found the visits to the dissection rooms really helped my understanding of the anatomy and helped me visualize everything within the human body in respective to each other.

John, First Year Student

Information on Special sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Maximum of 2 hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>Maximum of 30 if a double tutorial group e.g for basic life support skills training, but may be on a one to one basis if being taught how to use a particular piece of equipment for a year three dissertation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Style</td>
<td>Varied depending on the type of session.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Will I be required to take part in independent/self study?

Independent/self study is a key component of the course and therefore students need to be able to take responsibility for their own learning and have an insight into how they learn most effectively. To support this, the topics for self study are clearly indicated within the timetable and students are asked to complete learning style inventories, which they are then given the opportunity to discuss with their personal tutor. Exploring options of how to learn independently is also then developed further within subject areas. For example, within anatomy students are given the opportunity to develop their own learning with access to 3D models of joints, using body paints to outline muscles on each other and creating complex nerve pathways out of pipe cleaners.

Great emphasis is placed upon learning styles, with lectures that include all of these, for example we were shown a number of different ways we could go about learning the muscles before our anatomy exam.

Mark, First Year Student
What is Placement Learning?

Students commence placement learning in February or March of year 2 so that they feel well prepared for treating patients, albeit under the supervision of a clinical educator (a qualified Physiotherapist). However, although enjoyable, students often find clinical placements physically, mentally and emotionally demanding. Clinical and academic staff work together to assist supporting students with any challenges they may face.

All students will experience placements in the core areas of physiotherapy i.e. musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardiorespiratory and community. Placements will occur in a range of different environments reflective of today’s physiotherapy practise e.g. hospitals, GP practices, patients’ homes, care homes and professional sporting environments.

Before going on my first placement I was very apprehensive as the whole situation feels very unknown and I was worried I would feel out of my depth, but after meeting my clinical educator she immediately settled my nerves explaining what was expected of me and that they would firstly give me the opportunity to observe them for a few days to give me an idea on their treatment approach. My first week has been an incredible experience and although I have never felt so tired I am already eagerly awaiting the challenges that face me next week!

**Helen, Second Year Student**

Information on Placement Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Placements last 4 weeks (usually 8.30 – 4.30, Monday to Friday).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>In some instances you may be the only student, but in the larger hospitals there may be a small group of students doing different types of placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>A wide variety of clinical environments; in placements where students are unable to travel to and from the placement each day accommodation can be arranged by the programme’s clinical team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Style</td>
<td>Can be a one to one discussion with the clinical educator, be in-service-training with other clinical staff, or be based on a patient treatment session.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Professionalism on Placement

Professional presentation is fundamental in order to meet health and safety requirements, optimise infection control and promote patient confidence. Therefore students are expected to wear practical uniform adhere to the professional appearance and uniform policy. This includes having long hair tied back, having short nails (with no polish), not wearing anything below the elbow, no jewellery (including body piercings) and respecting the dignity of other students at all times. On placement, students are assessed on their clinical knowledge and skills as well as their professionalism (appearance and behaviour, basic management tasks, health and safety, attitude and communication).

How is the programme assessed?

Assessment of students involves a wide range of tasks, and incorporates both formative assessment (primarily to help you develop) and summative assessment (the marks contribute to your end of year mark / degree classification). The type of assessment is broad in order to accommodate different learning styles, but also to determine if you have the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to be awarded a degree in physiotherapy. All assessments take place throughout the academic year at strategic times in order to avoid a heavy assessment load at the end of each academic year, but also for students to receive feedback on one assessment and learn from it before progressing onto the next.

Learning and teaching activities are specifically planned to prepare students for assessment. Students with a disability or dyslexia can receive support for their learning, teaching and assessment from the disability and dyslexia service within Cardiff University (www.cardiff.ac.uk/dyslx). All written and practical examinations have a time limit, although some students e.g. those with dyslexia may receive extra time for written examinations. The programme strives to assess in the context of the requirements of a qualified Physiotherapist.

I was worried about the practical examination and it was a lot of work to prepare for it, but when I’d done it I felt much more confident about placement and treating “real patients”...and we had a great night out afterwards!

Steven, Second Year Student
Assessments during the programme and their contribution to the degree classification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assessments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 x written examinations</td>
<td>4 x placement learning</td>
<td>4 x placement learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 x written assignments</td>
<td>6 written assignments</td>
<td>1 x portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 x practical examinations</td>
<td>1 practical examination</td>
<td>1 x dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 x presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 x presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 x written assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution to degree classification</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contribution to degree classification</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contribution to degree classification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%, but need to pass all assessments to progress to year 2</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Useful Links

- Course Descriptions: [http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/healthcare-sciences/courses/undergraduate](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/healthcare-sciences/courses/undergraduate)
- Open Days: [http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/undergraduate/events.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/undergraduate/events.html)
Further Information

We advise that you have a look around the rest of course finder and our website, as there is lots of information on the programme, Cardiff University and the School of Healthcare Sciences. Also make sure you come along to one of our open days; it’s a fantastic opportunity to meet your lecturers, see the facilities and ask questions first hand.

If you have any queries / concerns whatsoever please do not hesitate to contact Amy Bendall who is a member of the Physiotherapy admissions team (bendalla@Cardiff.ac.uk) and can direct you to other staff within the school.

Once you’ve applied (via UCAS) and received your offer you will be asked to complete an ‘Essential To Do’ list, accessed via our website. This needs to be completed prior to the start of term. You'll be asked to sign off stating you've read and understood the materials presented in this leaflet.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

School of Healthcare Sciences