



MSc Advanced Practice and micro-credentials

Hannah Amos, Programme Director, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Background and context

The MSc Advanced Practice programme at Cardiff Metropolitan University is a Level 7 postgraduate initiative designed for health and care professionals seeking to deepen their expertise across four key pillars: clinical practice, research and audit, leadership and management, and education. The course reflects a commitment to contextualised, applied learning that enhances service delivery and professional growth.

Historically, the programme offered four distinct pathways for Allied Health Professionals: Audiology, Dietetics, Musculoskeletal and Speech and Language Therapy. Predominantly, these contained modules which were studied within the specialist pathways and, although some core modules were shared, staff and students could feel isolated in their learning and teaching. The structure also lacked flexibility for professionals balancing demanding careers and personal responsibilities. The traditional route required part-time students to complete 60 credits annually over three years, with a five-year candidature window. However, this model proved limiting for learners needing more adaptable options.

Curriculum review and redesign

Following a periodic review in 2024, the programme team undertook a comprehensive redesign to address viability, sustainability and accessibility. New pathways such as Dental Technology and Complex Lower Limb were introduced, alongside an overarching 'Healthcare' option to accommodate nursing and allied health professionals not previously included. The module portfolio expanded from 14 to 21 enabling a mix of core modules, e.g. evidence-based practice, alongside bespoke specialist modules, such as cleft palate assessment and the science of footwear. The module development supported interprofessional teaching and collaboration with students accessing more joint teaching delivered by the team rather than individual module leaders.

A pivotal development was the introduction of a micro-credential route. This flexible model allows learners to study individual modules without committing to a full award upfront. Credits can be banked and later applied toward a PGCert, Diploma or MSc. Learners may choose to study one, two, or three modules per year, with the option to pause their academic journey as needed.

Micro-credential benefits

- 21 modules can be studied individually as micro-credentials
- Learner chooses 1, 2 or 3 modules per year
- May involve interim years without academic study
- Credits may be 'banked'
- Opportunity to build into PGCert, Diploma or Masters
- No need to commit to an award until exit point

Importantly, micro-credential students are fully integrated into the Advanced Practice community, receiving the same support, guidance, and access to university resources as traditional MSc students.

Impact and future vision

The redesigned programme has already shown promising signs of impact. Learners report changes in their day-to-day practice from the outset, with one experienced clinician noting a transformation in patient consultations after 30 years in the field and another one commenting that 'it was one of the best things she has ever done'. Tutors build strong relationships with students, tailoring module recommendations to individual goals and exploring how the modules can support workplace development.



The micro-credentials attracted 48 students in the first year of running, and the University's Advanced Practice team envisions continued growth with returning and new micro-credential students in future. The team aims to raise the programme's profile and adapt the curriculum responsively to the evolving needs of health and care professionals. The integration of micro-credentials and flexible delivery methods, including online and block in-person sessions, ensures accessibility and relevance. Engagement with professional bodies has been positive, reinforcing the programme's alignment with sector expectations and its potential to foster parity across UK regions.

Cardiff Metropolitan University's MSc Advanced Practice exemplifies how thoughtful curriculum design and flexible learning pathways can empower professionals, enhance clinical practice, and build resilient educational communities. Through innovation and collaboration, the programme is shaping the future of advanced practice education in Wales and beyond.

This case study was presented at the QAA Cymru webinar 'Micro-credential postcards from the Nations: Practice-sharing event with a focus on micro-credential development around the UK' on 3 June 2025. The webinar formed part of the work of the Medr-funded Micro-credentials Special Interest Group (MIC.SIG).

Find out more about the MIC.SIG on the QAA Cymru [website](#).

