WHO IS IT FOR?
The ‘Clinical Doctorate’ programme is designed for experienced clinicians who wish to attain the highest goal of becoming ‘clinical academic’.
This is the ideal qualification for those who retain a clinical focus with commitment to the improvement of patient care.
Health care professionals on the Programme may include: nurses; midwives; dieticians; genetic counsellors; occupational therapists; paramedicine; physiotherapists; speech and language therapists; sport and exercise psychologists and podiatrists.

WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME ABOUT?
> Tackling complex ideas and challenging established modes of thinking
> Developing research and scholarship skills harnessed imaginatively to the field of clinical practice
> Preparing to be at the cutting edge of clinical and research practice for your area of ‘expertness’
> Familiarity with leading-edge research, an ability to redesign the clinical environment and understanding of the research process
> The programme aims to change the way students think
> Staff provide intensive individual support and feedback

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE STIRLING PROGRAMME
This is the only programme of its kind in Scotland in its clinical focus, and very different from similar programmes in the UK.
> The programme, including assignments, is rooted in clinical practice
> Students are expected to make a significant contribution to their field of practice from the very beginning of the programme
> The latest ideas and methods from other academic disciplines are applied to the students’ own fields of expertise

PROGRAMME DESIGN
The programme takes 3 years full-time and between 4–8 years, part-time.
Students study three taught modules in the first two years. Each module consists of two 3-day blocks (and six weeks of independent study). There are five core modules:
> Contemporary Health Care Theory and Research
> Project Management in Health Care Organisations
> Research Design for Clinical Practice
Followed by student-led modules with supervision:
> Expert Practice
> Thesis: practice-focused, empirical research

TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT
The main method of assessment is course work, with one practice based examination.
In the fourth module, expert clinical practice is observed and assessed by clinical academic experts from your field of practice. The thesis is supervised by active researchers.
Students are well supported through regular face-to-face contact, video conferencing, skype, email and phone. There is tutorial time in preparation for each assignment, and detailed feedback afterwards.
Contemporary Health Care Theory and Research (NURPD01):

This module brings you up-to-date with the latest ideas, the latest findings, and the latest methods – taken from across the spectrum of academic research, and harnessed imaginatively to the clinical environment. It’s a module that will probably challenge some of your assumptions – and it will certainly challenge how you think about the relation between research, scholarship and expertise.

Project Management in Health Care (NURPD02):

The second module builds on the first, but the underlying theme of the second module is problem solving – not in an abstract sense, but in a way that is directed to a particular clinical problem that you will be invited to identify in your own clinical environment. Students are encouraged to think about designing evidence into fields of practice and organisations.

Research Design for Clinical Practice (NURPD03):

This doctorate is about clinically significant research. You have to know about research. It’s an essential part of the modern health service. In this module we work together to promote a generic knowledge of research methods whilst keeping the clinical relevance of your research interests in our sights at all times. You start to develop your research proposal ideas at this point.

Expert Practice (NURPD04):

A clinical doctorate is a PhD-level test of your effectiveness as a clinician. This includes familiarity with recent research, an ability to redesign the clinical environment, and an understanding of the research process. Crucially, however, it also includes your specialist clinical skills. We don’t think we can teach you those, but we do think we can assess them – with the help of experts from your field of practice, in consultation with you, the student. So this module is all about preparing for that: you have to prepare a demonstration of your expertise; we organise a full and fair assessment. It sounds daunting, but students describe it as ‘a really worthwhile opportunity’; ‘such a validation’.

The Thesis: practice-focused, empirical research (NURPD05)

The climax! You spend around four years on this – and end up producing a thesis of approximately 40,000 words. You choose a topic that is relevant to your field of practice. You determine whether it’s worthwhile, original – and feasible. Then you design a research study capable of answering a specific question. Next, you conduct the study – thoughtfully, ethically, and meticulously. Finally, you complete analysis of the data, and write the thesis. It’s a long slog, with plenty of ups and downs. You will need a lot of motivation, and excellent supervisors. You provide the first, we provide the second.

MY STIRLING

Comments from Students on the Programme

* "We’re all from different clinical backgrounds, which makes the class discussions we have very interesting; we’re constantly learning from each other. This is something we do a lot in class: discuss the work we’re doing for our assignments. It’s amazing how much you can learn from that and, how enjoyable it is."

* "The best thing about the Doctor of Nursing is the way in which everything is directly linked to what you do clinically, including the assignments. It’s not just an academic exercise: what I’ve done on the course has a real impact on my day-to-day work."

WHAT IS THE CREDIT LEVEL AND VALUE?

The Clinical Doctorate is at levels 11 and 12 within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). 340 credits points are awarded for the programme of study of which at least 420 are at level 12.

RESEARCH RATING

In the most recent research assessment exercise (REF 2014) the School came top for health research in Scotland and was ranked 12th in the UK.

Overall over half of our research activity was ranked as 4* placing us top in Scotland and 9th in the UK.

Nearly 90% of our peer-reviewed research papers were rated as being of international significance.

For further information about our Research Programmes and Centres please see http://www.stir.ac.uk/health-sciences/research/

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates for the clinical doctorate should normally have:

> A Master’s degree and/or good Honours degree (in a relevant discipline)

> Registration as a Nurse/Midwife/Health Care Professional and, normally five years’ post-registration experience

FUNDING

For information on possible sources of funding, visit http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/finance/scholarships/index.php

PROGRAMME START DATE

Part-time: September each year.

Part-time/Full-time: September each year.

CPD: NURPD01: NURPD02: NURPD03: NURPD04 are also available on a stand-alone basis.

GET IN TOUCH

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