

Postgraduate Certificate in Health Communications, Engagement and Consultation

PG Cert FAQs

- Who is this course for?

Our aim is to develop a qualification that becomes recognised as the gold-standard qualification for all health and care professionals in the fields of health communication, engagement and public consultation. The first cohort is targeted at the next generation of NHS communication and engagement leaders and those who aspire to leadership in these fields. Typically course participants will be NHS employees on Band 8a and above but we would also welcome applications from candidates on NHS Band 7.

- What qualifications do I need to apply?

Technically you need an undergraduate degree in any subject or alternative professional communication experience. For practical purposes anybody on Band 7 or above would be highly likely to have the necessary “equivalent experience” even if they do not have a degree.

- How long does the course last and how much time will I need to devote to it?

The course is a part time course. It can easily be completed while continuing with a full time job. The first cohort is scheduled to begin in early 2025 and teaching is spread over the calendar year. The course involves twelve days residential teaching - spread over the year in three-day blocks - plus a further ten to fifteen lectures that are delivered online. Typically, public sector employees are given “study time” off by their employer in order to complete the residential teaching. This avoids the need for course participants to use their holiday allowance to complete the course.

- What are the time commitments beyond the residential teaching days and what is involved in terms of assessments/essays/assignments/homework/reading etc?

Apart from the 12 days of residential teaching the course does not involve a significant amount of your time. You will need to complete three short essays and a personal project over the course of the year, but this can be done at your own pace and previous course participants have not found this to be difficult or onerous. We try to deliver the course in a highly flexible manner so that people can largely follow it at their own pace. The course is a fully accredited University course, so it is properly assessed and externally examined and there will be a course reading list, but course participants typically tend to read more about the areas they are most interested in.

- What is the personal project about?

The personal project is something course participants may work on over the course of the year. Projects will vary depending on the interests of the participant and the type of health or care organisation they work for. We encourage people to make their project as practical as possible and - if possible - to be of real use to their organisation.

- What about travel and other expenses?

The course fees do not cover travel expenses. They do, however, cover all student expenses (including food and hotel costs) during the residential teaching blocks.

- Can the Health Communication and Consultation PG Certificate be funded through the Apprenticeship Levy?

No. This is not an apprenticeship course.

- What level is this postgraduate course?

This is a fully accredited University postgraduate course at the Postgraduate Certificate level. It is a Level 7 University course. Course participants receive a University graduation certificate and can use the appropriate letters after their name. They can also use the completion of this course to shorten other postgraduate courses such as a Masters' degree.

- What academic resources will be available to course participants and what is their status with the University?

Course participants are full registered students at Buckinghamshire New University. They have access to the University's facilities including the extensive online library.

- Is there mentoring between modules?

Yes. Course participants receive comprehensive and flexible support throughout the year of the course and this support can be tailored to their particular needs, working arrangements and family arrangements.

- Can I take the learning from this course back and share it with colleagues within my NHS organisation?

Yes. In fact, we actively encourage this. A major part of the course involves “skills transfer”. We aim to support course participants as they take their learning back and share it within their organisation. Your NHS employer is not just investing in you, they are investing in a whole learning process that benefits the wider organisation.

NHS professional communicators and engagement specialists on this course are supported thanks to a generous grant from the Health Foundation, an independent health charity with a large endowment which enables it to make annual grants designed to improve health and care.

