Developing your dementia intelligence

Leadership in dementia care, dementia research or supporting people with dementia in the community requires an expert grounding in key theoretical, policy and research-based knowledge and interventions.

In the new landscape of integrated provision, it also benefits learning from others who are pursuing similar aims, sharing ideas and passion for the subject, looking at things together from unfamiliar perspectives, to innovate and excel. It also demands learning from the experiences of people with dementia and their supporters, encouraging a critical approach, to constantly ask: *what does it mean to people affected by dementia? What difference does this really make?* There is a current and increasing need for practitioners and researchers who are equipped with critical dementia knowledge to engage fully in what is a major national and international social challenge.

At the University of Sheffield our multi-disciplinary MA in Dementia Studies is designed to help you to achieve your aspirations and support your development in dementia care practice or research. It is delivered collaboratively by experienced and research-active staff in the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the departments of Sociological Studies and Human Communication Sciences. All modules on the course are delivered ‘face-to-face’ because we believe dementia care education is more effective this way—and our students agree.

The active involvement of persons with dementia and their supporters is an established principle of dementia education at the University of Sheffield. In practice these partnerships help us to support persons with dementia and their supporters to contribute to our teaching sessions and advise us on programme development and progress.

Colin Ward, a contributor to the MA Dementia Studies, says: “

> “Since I was diagnosed with 2 forms of Alzheimer’s in 2012 I have told people from all walks of life of its affects on me. As a volunteer researcher for the Alzheimer’s Society I keep up to date with latest treatments. Some 3 years ago I added another string to my bow. I can now inform directly students undergoing dementia studies of the affects of AD first hand”

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Programme structure:

The MA Dementia Studies full-time programme (NURT65) begins in September 2018 and concludes in September 2019. Dates for the study days (2 days a week during academic semesters) are available on the MA Dementia Studies webpage (see bottom of this page). The programme consists of 8 compulsory modules (see Table below) plus a Research Dissertation or an alternative clinically-facing module, Critical Development of Clinical Practice. Please note you can apply to study individual modules. All students are allocated an experienced personal tutor.

Table 1: MA Dementia Studies compulsory modules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Lead</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theorising Dementia within the UK Policy Context</td>
<td>David Reid and Berni Murphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding communication in dementia</td>
<td>Professor Ray Wilkinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palliative and supportive care</td>
<td>Dr Tony Ryan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective safeguarding for people with dementia</td>
<td>Berni Murphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive of People with Dementia: Involvement and Impact</td>
<td>Dr Jane McKeown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial approaches to the care and support people with dementia</td>
<td>Dr Jane McKeown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia and Identity</td>
<td>Berni Murphy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-based Practice</td>
<td>David Reid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information for applicants:

Applicants will have a first degree or accrued 120 credits at level six (degree level); or be able to demonstrate their ability to study at this level. Students may register for the programme or for single modules. Though it is anticipated that many applicants will already have clinical experience of caring for or supporting people with dementia this is not a requirement for registration.

For a conversation about the programme or for more information please contact:

David Reid (MA Dementia Studies, Programme Lead)
Telephone: 0114 222 2060 or Email: d.reid@sheffield.ac.uk

Fees and funding:

- **Tuition Fees:** The annual tuition fee for self funding or sponsored students are available via the University PG fees webpages: [www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/fees/pgt/lookup](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/fees/pgt/lookup)

- **If you work for the NHS or allied organisations LBR funding** may be available, subject to eligibility and availability. Please refer to our funding pages for further information: [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hsccdp/funding](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hsccdp/funding)

- There are 100+ £10k [Sheffield Postgraduate Scholarships](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance/sps) available and the MA Dementia Studies is one of the eligible programmes. Find out more at [www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance/sps](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance/sps) (Deadline in May 2018)
What our graduates say about the University of Sheffield MA Dementia Studies:

What were the most positive things about your study experience?

“The MA Dementia Studies was an absorbing, challenging and intense experience for me. As a mature student I could join up my practical experience with the latest theoretical approaches. Full time study was totally immersive and very satisfying. I loved all the opportunities to listen, think, debate and write, while cultivating the ability to consider a range of perspectives. I appreciated the delivery of the material by different academic departments across the university, and enjoyed the diversity of teaching and learning methods, including group work, field work and the chance to deliver a presentation. I feel the course helped me to develop my confidence and enthusiasm for the subject, and has enabled me to make a greater difference to the lives of people with dementia and their families” (Julia Pearson, graduated 2018)

“The amount of resources made available by the module leaders for all the courses for the students was outstanding. Tutorials, different teaching methods, meetings and so on...I felt much supported throughout my course” (Veronica Chilaka, graduated 2018)

“This study experience has given me the confidence to care for people with dementia in a positive patient centred way. It has allowed me to expand my knowledge and feed this back to my work area creating an educational role and a source of information for others” (Deborah Searson, graduated 2017)

“I particularly liked the regular weekly attendance at University as it is my preferred way of learning and provided time out of the workplace to focus on the topic areas and assignments. I also found sharing experiences with other students and tutors really helpful and gave me the opportunity to clarify any concerns that I had. The support from the other students was particularly helpful and invaluable. We all came from different professional backgrounds, with different experiences and a variety of ages which worked really well” (Maggie Parry-Hughes, graduated 2017)

“The group was quite small which I think helped us to build relationships easily. All members of the group worked in different settings which gave lots of different perspectives to my own which I found useful. I found the modules enjoyable and think the support from the staff team was great” (Emma Lowry, graduated 2018)

“The study has provided me with a lot more knowledge and confidence in knowing up to date research and evidence-based practice. I also feel more confident to analyse / critique evidence and research” (Philomena O'Hanlon, graduated 2018)

Has studying for an MA in Dementia Studies helped you in your career?

“Definitely! People with dementia make up the majority of my caseload as a social worker. When explaining to families that I have done this course it is almost as if they feel relief that I will understand what they are going through, understand the person and ensure they are getting the right care and treatment” (Eden Haytree, graduated 2018)

“The MA Dementia Studies programme has proven extremely beneficial to me in my career since completing the course one year ago I have developed a tremendous amount in my career. Following completion of the course 2 months later a position became available to become a more senior member of the team and I was appointed as Band 6 Sister on the same unit, feedback from my interview suggested that having worked in that area already was a positive but that the MA Dementia studies gave me an overall advantage” (Deborah Searson, graduated 2017)

“I feel like I have gained lots of useful knowledge that will help me make better assessments and provide better care for my patients. I think I have also become more of a leader in good dementia care in the setting I work in and feel confident in teaching junior staff about dementia” (Emma Lowry, graduated 2018)
Would you recommend the MA Dementia Studies to your colleagues?

“Yes because there are a lot of staff who report as being experienced in dementia care having worked in the field for a long time. However experience does not always equate to knowledge” (Philomena O'Hanlon, graduated 2018)

“It is a rewarding course with plenty of opportunities to get involved in activities that before this I would have known nothing about. The opportunity to work with other professionals was great and helped to develop my understanding of how others work with people with dementia in different practice settings. The course couldn’t be more relevant at the moment to health and social care professionals/volunteers to enhance their knowledge and improve future care of those with dementia” (Eden Haytree, graduated 2018)

“Yes I will definitely recommend it because of the knowledge and empowerment it gives you in your career in nursing and especially in the care of people with dementia” (Veronica Chilaka, graduated 2018)

“I would recommend this course to anyone who has a passion for the care of people with dementia and who would like to be challenged educationally; the sense of achievement is remarkable” (Deborah Searson, graduated 2017)

“I would certainly recommend it to those colleagues working in dementia care or have a passion for improving their knowledge in dementia...Although it was challenging at times it was also very enjoyable and informative. I found the sharing of experiences and knowledge with tutors and students really beneficial. The course has not only improved my academic knowledge which I have been able to transfer into practice, but also my confidence” (Maggie Parry-Hughes, graduated 2017)

“Yes. The course provides essential thinking space to those who would like to have greater impact when delivering better approaches to dementia policy or practical dementia care.” (Julia Pearson, graduated 2018)

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