

## **FAQs about our new integrated Master's degree, MSci Healthcare Science (Audiology)**

### **What is it?**

Our MSci Healthcare Science (Audiology) is a four-year undergraduate-entry degree. (Part-time options are also available, see below.) It is the first of its kind in the UK, although integrated Master's programmes for many other subjects have existed for many years.

The first 3 years of our MSci are identical to our BSc (Hons) Healthcare Science (Audiology) degree. The fourth year (i.e. the Master's year) builds on your theoretical and clinical experience as well as offering considerable flexibility in terms of which modules you study within and outside audiology.

### **Do I have to do it?**

No. On successful completion of the BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology), you don't have to complete any form of Master's degree before registering as an audiologist and working in audiology in the UK.

Having a Master's degree is useful in seeking promotion from Band 5 to Band 6 and is often essential for promotion from Band 6 to Band 7. It is therefore likely that you will consider doing a Master's degree at some point in your audiology career. The MSci provides an exciting and effective opportunity for you to do this immediately after your BSc-level studies.

### **Can I apply for the MSci instead of the BSc through UCAS?**

From the 2014-15 application cycle, you will be able to apply through UCAS for either the BSc or MSci. The admission criteria are the same. Alternatively, you can apply for the BSc and transfer to the MSci later (visa regulations permitting).

One of the important benefits of the MSci for international students is that you can essentially apply for BSc and MSc programmes in one go and get one visa to cover all. In many countries, it is essential to have a Master's degree in order to practice as an autonomous audiologist. Our MSci provides you convenience and piece of mind that you have a clear path to working as an audiologist before you when you start. You will also be able to take the full clinical placement because it meets visa requirements by being integral part of the programme.

### **Can I transfer to or from the MSci if I change my mind?**

Yes, you can transfer from our BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology) to our MSci (visa regulations permitting). You will need to fill out a programme transfer request form available from our Faculty Student Office. For UK/EU students, it is best you have done this before the end of June of your third year. The absolute deadline is in July of your third year (the Faculty Student Office can advise you of the exact date).

You can also transfer out of the MSci and into the BSc if you change your mind. It is not normally possible to transfer from the BSc back to the MSci if you've already transferred from the MSci to the BSc.

If you are enrolled on MSci and you don't meet the criteria to progress to the fourth year, you will be able to leave with the award of BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology) just as if you had been enrolled on that all along. Similarly, if you do not pass the fourth year of the MSci, you will also be able to leave with the award of BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology).

### **Is it an alternative to the BSc?**

In practice, no. The first three years of our MSci are identical to the three years of our BSc. The BSc and MSci appear separately, e.g. in UCAS, for administrative purposes, thus giving the impression it is an alternative. It is your choice whether you apply for or transfer to the MSci or not.

### **How can I finance it?**

One of the main advantages to UK students of an integrated Master's [such as our MSci Healthcare Science (Audiology)] compared to a traditional, one-year stand-alone Master's (such as our MSc Audiology) is that it can usually be funded by a normal student loan as with the BSc. The normal student loan is usually available for up to 4 years of full-time study for those starting as an undergraduate. A loan for the equivalent amount of time is available for people taking the MSci, or parts of it, part-time although the amount might be less (as it may be assumed you are covering your general maintenance by working part-time). A student loan is not available for traditional, one-year stand-alone MSc degrees, which are typically much trickier to finance, though career development loans might be available.

It is important that you check with the section of Student Services that deals with student finances to confirm what you are eligible for.

### **Is there a part-time option?**

It is possible to take the fourth (Master's) year of the MSci part-time across two years giving you the opportunity to earn and learn. We recommend this for most UK students because of the value of maintaining and developing your clinical skills as well as linking your studies with your on-going clinical experiences. If taken part-time, you might find that you are eligible for a student loan that only covers tuition fees on the assumption that your maintenance is funded by your earnings. We anticipate that this part-time option will not be practical for most EU/international students, but the option is there.

If you take it full-time across one year, you will take the module Clinical Audiology 1 which will help you maintain your clinical skills and assess that you have.

### **When do I have to say that I want to do it?**

See the answer to *Can I transfer to or from the MSci if I change my mind?* above.

### **What if I change my mind?**

During the first 3 years of the BSc and MSci you will be able to easily transfer from one to the other if you wish. If you have started the Master's year and you change your mind, you will be able to exit with a BSc and a letter documenting the Master's level modules you have completed.

### **Can I transfer into the Master's year of the MSci from a different university?**

No. We only consider transfers from appropriate degrees into the first year and the beginning of the second year of our BSc and MSci (e.g. BSc Healthcare Science (Audiology/Neurosensory) degree at different universities and from the Foundation Degree in Hearing Aid Audiology).

### **What are the benefits?**

As noted above in answer to *Do I have to do it?*, having a Master's degree provides benefits in terms of career progression within audiology in the UK, and it is often essential to working as an autonomous audiologist in many countries outside of the UK. We also anticipate that it will also help you compete in the UK, EU and international audiology job market.

Compared to a traditional stand-alone MSc Audiology, it has benefits in being more flexible in which modules you take (see *What does it involve?*), it does not repeat clinical practicum or the basic audiology you have done and, for UK students, it can be financed with a student loan (see *How can I finance it?*).

The flexibility of our MSci and ability to study modules outside of audiology also provide you with an opportunity to develop a broader understanding of issues in health care, engineering or social science. This will better prepare you for leadership, education and research roles within audiology and health services more generally. For example, you will also be in a stronger position for if applying for a PhD position. (See *What optional modules can I take?*) Even more generally, having a Master of Science degree puts you in a strong position for alternative career pathways within and outside of audiology and is valued highly by employers.

### **What do I need to achieve in year 3 to progress to year 4 of the MSci?**

You will need to achieve an aggregate score of 55% or more in Part 2 (i.e. year 2) and in Part 3 (i.e. year 3).

### **Is it accredited?**

The primary Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) have agreed to accept the MSci as an alternative to the BSc for professional registration. We have conditional approval of the MSci as an alternative to the BSc from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and are awaiting the decision of the National School of Healthcare Science.

Certain optional discipline-specific Master's modules have been approved by the British Academy of Audiology (BAA) as part of their Higher Training Scheme (HTS) that provides a route to Clinical Scientist Registration.

Students from outside of the UK need to check that the programme satisfies the requirements of their home country to practice as an audiologist.

## **Will I be able to register as a Clinical Scientist after the MSci?**

The following applies to UK residents only. Not without going through the British Academy of Audiology's (BAA's) Higher Training Scheme (HTS), the Scientist Training Programme (STP) or the newly emerging route for equivalence to the STP<sup>1</sup>. If you are planning to take the HTS route to Clinical Scientist registration, it is important that you select the discipline-specific modules that will enable that; we will help to guide you to those.

### **What does it involve?**

The first three years (full-time) of the MSci are identical to the BSc.

The fourth (Master's) year of the MSci is associated with 155 credits (CATS), which is 35 credits more than each year of the BSc. It will be hard work!

*Component 1: General healthcare science modules (min 80, max 110 credits)*

Decision Making for Advanced Clinical Practice. Compulsory. 20 credits. Semester 2.

Research Project (dissertation). Compulsory. 45 credits. Semesters 1 and 2. Literature review starts during summer of Year 3.

*Minimum of 15 credits and maximum of 45 credits of optional Level 6 or 7 modules from within the University, usually including a research methods or statistics module (appropriate for your Research Project), subject to approval by the Programme Co-ordinator or Director of Programmes and in accordance with University regulations on taking Level 6 modules during Part 4 of an Integrated Master's.*

*Component 2: Discipline-specific modules (min 45, max 105 credits)*

If you are taking the Master's element of the MSci part-time, you must take Clinical Audiology 1 (15 credits); Semester 1 (with practical assessments at end of semester 2).

At least three of the following (all 15 credits):

Physiology and Psychology of Hearing. Semester 1.

Rehabilitation of Auditory Disorders\*§. Semester 1.

Clinical Audiology 2. Semester 2.

Fundamentals of Auditory Implants. Semester 2.

Paediatric Audiology\*§. Semester 2

Assessment and Management of Vestibular Disorders\*§. Semester 1.

\*previously approved by the BAA as part of the Higher Training Scheme – revised module pending approval (no problems anticipated). Required for HTS route to Clinical Scientist registration.

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<sup>1</sup> The details of this have yet to emerge but it will almost certainly require additional Master's level study beyond the MSci (e.g. to cover the neurophysiology and ophthalmology/vision elements).

## **Which non-audiology optional modules can I take?**

You can take a minimum of 15 CATS credits (usually one module) and a maximum of 45 CATS credits (usually three modules) worth of modules outside of audiology. (15 CATS credits = 7.5 ECTS credits, and some faculties will automatically mean ECTS credits when talking about 'credits'.) A certain amount of this is allowed to be at Level 6 (i.e. equivalent to third year of BSc) accordingly to university regulations; otherwise they have to be at Level 7 (i.e. Master's level).

In principle, these can be from anywhere with the University of Southampton. However, each module will need to be approved by the MSci Programme Co-ordinator or Director of Audiology Programmes so you will need to convince that person of a module's relevance. You will also need to obtain the approval of the Module Lead for each module and to inform your Faculty Student Office before you start the module.

At least 15 credits should go on a module that is relevant to your research project (e.g. research methods, computer programming, statistics, modelling...).

From a practical perspective, you will need to ensure that you can attend and engage with the learning activities of each module (e.g. attend lectures). This means checking carefully that there are no insurmountable timetable clashes, which in turn might mean you won't be able to take all the modules you would like to and that you have to make a compromise. The MSci Programme Co-ordinator or Director of Audiology Programmes will talk this through with you before giving their approval, though the responsibility to ensure you can attend a module lies with you. See *Do I have to plan my own timetable?*

Here are some examples of highly relevant but non-audiology modules from our faculty and the Faculty of Health Sciences. Bear in mind that from time to time modules come and go. That list is only meant to provide a taster of what might be possible.

### ***What modules outside of audiology previous students have taken***

Quantitative Methods I, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences  
Psychosocial Relationships in Health & Social Care, Faculty of Health Sciences  
Health Care Law 1, Faculty of Business & Law  
Health Care Law 2, Faculty of Business & Law

#### ***Faculty of Health Sciences***

##### *Level 6*

[NQCG3133 Leadership and Management of Innovation and Change](#)

[NQCG3114 Leadership in Health and Social Care](#)

[NQCG3134 Motivational Interviewing in the Service of Health Promotion](#)

##### *Level 7*

[HLTH6061 Psychosocial Relationships in Health and Social Care](#)

[HLTH6075 Leading Others](#)

[HLTH6076 Self Leadership](#)

[HLTH6080 Health Promotion, Motivational Interviewing and Health Behaviour Change](#)

[HLTH6095 People, Politics, Practice: Contextualising Health Care Research](#)  
[HLTH6101 Research Methods for Improving Health Services](#)  
[HLTH6104 Healthcare Informatics](#)  
[HLTH6107 Research Methods for Evidence Based Practice](#)  
[HLTH6110 Applied Qualitative Research Methods](#)  
[HLTH6111 Applied Quantitative Research Methods](#)  
[HLTH6114 Clinical Research in Practice](#)  
[HLTH6116 Developing Research Skills](#)  
[HLTH6153 Research Methods for Evidence Based Practice \(Online\)](#)

See also: [www.southampton.ac.uk/healthsciences/cpd/courses.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/healthsciences/cpd/courses.page)

### **Do I have to take responsibility for my own timetable?**

Yes. Because the MSci offers considerable flexibility in terms of which modules you take, every student's timetable will be a bit different. It is extremely important that you recognise that we will provide you with the timetables for the modules you are interested in but that you will need to take the lead in ensuring that the modules will fit, or can be fitted, into your timetable. In short: you will need to manage your timetable and your time. We will provide you with support in doing this.

### **What are the alternatives?**

There are five types of Master's programmes in audiology in the UK:

(1) One-year, stand-alone MSc that is primarily, but not exclusively, for those with no audiology background, often referred to as a pre-registration Master's. We set up the first of these in 1972. University of Manchester, UCL and Queen Margaret's University (Edinburgh) now offer one too. They are usually self-funded although financial assistance can sometimes be obtained from an employer. These are likely to be less relevant to people who are doing or have done a BSc in audiology.

(2) Stand-alone MSc that is primarily for those with an audiology background, often referred to as a post-registration Master's. Our MSci can be thought of as combining the pre-registration BSc and a post-registration MSc in one programme. Several universities offer these, often with a specific focus, such as University of Manchester, DeMontfort University (Leicester) and Queen Margaret's University (Edinburgh).

(3) Scientist Training Programme (STP). This is a national training scheme that includes funded MSc and clinical training towards Clinical Scientist registration both for those that do and don't have an audiology background. That MSc is currently undertaken at Universities of Manchester or Aston.

(4) Stand-alone MRes Clinical Research. We were the first university to offer this programme with an audiology pathway (along with several other disciplines). It is focussed on providing you with training in clinical research. In some cases, this can be funded through the NHS.

(5) The new MSci, which combines a pre-registration BSc and a post-registration MSc in one programme. We are the first university to offer an integrated Master's programme in Audiology and, more broadly, 'Healthcare Science'.

Note that there are many other Master's degrees in related field you might be interested in. There are also other forms of study you might want to take as well or instead such as stand-alone Master's modules, doctorate programmes (e.g. PhD, DClinP, AuD).