



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

WE'RE TAKING ON TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES.

ARE YOU?



Our academics use their research to fight disease, help people live longer and healthier lives and protect the planet. They ask how we can shape the world we live in by reflecting on the past, understanding the present and planning for the future.

Join us. Together we can make a remarkable impact on the world.

**POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN LAW:
MENTAL HEALTH**
(Approved Clinician Preparatory Programme)

Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Law: Mental Health (Approved Clinician Preparatory Programme)

This Programme of blended learning runs twice each year offering an educational approach with opportunities for learners to attend classroom based teaching and learning sessions. It has been tailored to provide a systematic academic and work-based means to enable eligible professionals to prepare for the Approved Clinician (AC) role (Mental Health Act 1983) and to produce evidence of the relevant competencies for Approved Clinicians.


The Programme has been designed with reference to the applicable Mental Health legislation and guidance including the DOH Guidance for seeking AC status via the portfolio route (DoH, 2017), Health Education England Multi-Professional AC/RC Implementation Guide (HEE, 2020), and the NHS England National Curriculum to Develop Relevant Competencies for Professionals Intending to Apply for 'Approved Clinician' Status via the Portfolio Route (NHS, 2023).

This Programme will be of particular relevance to the following professionals:

- **Medical practitioners without a certificate of specialist registration**
- **Psychologists**
- **Mental Health / Learning disability nurses**
- **Occupational therapists**
- **Social workers**

“I found the course absolutely invaluable in helping me to develop my understanding of the legal framework of the MHA and other legislation which ACs must pay attention to (including the Mental Capacity Act and the Human Rights Act) and to support me to start to conceptualise and describe my skills in the ways necessary to demonstrate the required competence of an Approved Clinician.”

Esther Wilcox, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust in '365 Days Later – Experiences of my first year working as an Approved Clinician' Bulletin of the Faculty for People with Intellectual Disabilities, Vol. 17, No. 3, December 2019.



Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice in Law: Mental Health (Approved Clinician Preparatory Programme)

This blended learning programme has been devised to provide comprehensive preparation for the AC role. It combines teaching on the core elements of the AC competency framework, delivered by lawyers and ACs, with the opportunity to develop reflective practice and to obtain a Northumbria University qualification. Learning is supported by a Technology Enhanced Learning Platform.

This work-based qualification enables groups of learners to undertake a programme of study, over one year, whilst continuing to work in their chosen profession, tailoring the programme to suit their own Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs. It supports learners to form learning sets with fellow learners; to identify their personal learning needs; to develop reflection and draw upon the skills and expertise acquired in the workplace and through CPD. Each learner is allocated a University Mentor who is also an AC to assist the learner to develop knowledge and skills relevant to the AC competencies.

What do I have to do for a Professional Practice in Law Award?

Module 1:

- Produce a **Learning Contract** to help you identify your personal development needs and plan a programme of learning activities. This Learning Contract will be aligned to the guidance on becoming an AC and incorporate a summary of your current experiences relevant to that role.
- Produce a **Training Log** consisting of a record and evidence of CPD activities that you have engaged with; a summary of knowledge gained; application to practice; and impact on professional development.
- Attend interactive, **tutor-led CPD sessions** of learning and teaching.
- Produce a **Reflective Commentary** on an area of law relating to decisions reserved to the RC.
- Complete a **series of MCQs** intended to test your ability to apply learning.

Module 2:

- Engage in a **Work-based Project** that will have a real impact on your professional practice to include the production of a statutory Tribunal report relating to your involvement in the care of a detained patient and a reflective account of how you have compiled the report.
- Attend additional **online practical classes** and workshops.

For the avoidance of doubt, although the Programme focuses on enabling learners to demonstrate competencies for approval for the AC role, the approval process is a matter for the relevant approving authority in accordance with the relevant regulations and is an entirely distinct process to this Preparatory Programme.

A feature of this programme is its flexibility and blended approach of CPD sessions.



CPD interactive teaching and learning sessions will include all core elements identified in the National Curriculum, including:

- The Legal Context - a consideration of the overall legal framework and the application of key legal concepts relevant to the AC role.
- Assessment - in the context of the AC role, including assessment relevant to the basis for detention.
- Portfolio Awareness - preparation of the portfolio for AC approval, including professional guidance.
- EDI - consideration of matters of equality and diversity with reference to patients subject to the Mental Health Act 1983 and Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Report Writing & Communication - consideration of sample RC reports and RC report writing within the legal framework of the Tribunal and Managers' Hearings.

Each learner will be offered a University Mentor (UM) who will encourage them to self assess their progress and to identify and plan professional development opportunities as required to evidence the necessary AC competencies. The UMs attached to the programme are experienced ACs from a range of professional backgrounds and located across England. Learners will take personal responsibility for arranging meetings with their UM at times that are mutually convenient to them. Tripartite meetings between learner, UM and work-based mentor are also encouraged.

Facilitators include:

Carole Burrell, Associate Professor in Law, Solicitor; John Taylor, Professor, Northumbria Law School, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and AC; Kaitlin Whelan, Lecturer in Law, Solicitor.



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND TO APPLY:

Contact Carole Burrell, email: carole.burrell@northumbria.ac.uk

Teaching Dates:

For the February 2026 cohort teaching will take place on the following dates:

- 24 February (in-person, Northumbria Law School) 11am-4.00pm
- 25 February (in-person, Northumbria Law School) 9.15am – 3.30pm
- 4, 6, 11, 13, 18 March (online) 9.15am-12.30pm
- 24 March (in-person, Northumbria Law School) 11am-4.00pm
- 25 March (in-person, Northumbria Law School) 9.15am – 3.30pm
- 15, 17, 22, 24 April (online) 9.15am – 12.30pm
- 28 April (in-person, Northumbria Law School) 11am-4.00pm
- 29 April (in-person, Northumbria Law School) 9.15am – 3.30pm
- 6, 8 May (online) 9.15am – 12.30pm

“My experience has been entirely positive, and I would recommend the programme to any trainee Multi Professional AC. Since being enrolled, and with the support and guidance from my University Mentor, I have been able to protect the time required to produce and submit the portfolio. Prior to the programme, I was struggling to gain the relevant experience required to meet the eight competencies and I was feeling stuck, despondent and directionless.

I have been approved by the London panel and am now a Multi-Professional Approved Clinician. I was not required by the panel to make any amendments to the portfolio, which I understand is unusual and I strongly believe that is related to the high quality of training, support and guidance I received whilst on the Programme.”

Dr Jacqueline Bryant, Consultant Clinical Psychologist & Approved Clinician. Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust.