University of Suffolk

DEFINITIVE COURSE RECORD

Course Title	**PgC Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry**
Awarding Bodies	**University of Suffolk**
Level of Award[1]	**FHEQ Level 7**
Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies Recognition	**College of Radiographers**
Credit Structure[2]	**60 Credits at level 7**
Mode of Attendance	**Part-time**
Standard Length of Course[3]	**1 year part-time**
Intended Award	**PgC Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry**
Named Exit Awards	**None**
Entry Requirements[4]	• **Current registration with relevant professional body** • **A first degree, ideally healthcare related.** • **Currently working in the field for a minimum of one year** • **Suitable qualified mentor to sign off competencies**
Delivering Institution	**University of Suffolk**

This definitive record sets out the essential features and characteristics of the PgC Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DXA) course. The information provided is accurate for students entering level 7 in the 2025 academic year[5].

Course Summary

Osteoporosis and fragility fractures represent a significant and growing public health concern in the United Kingdom, with profound clinical, social, and economic impacts. The NHS faces immense financial pressure from the management of fragility fractures. As mentioned, the annual cost of fractures associated with osteoporosis exceeds £4.6 billion (Svedbom *et al*., 2013). The establishment of a dedicated postgraduate certificate in DXA aligns with the urgent need to address this through enhanced education and workforce capability.

[1] For an explanation of the levels of higher education study, see the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2024)
[2] All academic credit awarded as a result of study at the University adheres to the Higher education credit framework for England.
[3] Where the course is delivered both full-time and part-time, the standard length of course is provided for the full-time mode of attendance only. The length of the part-time course is variable and dependent upon the intensity of study. Further information about mode of study and maximum registration periods can be found in the Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards.
[4] Details of standard entry requirements can be found in the Admissions Policy and further details about Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) can be found on the University's DBS webpage.
[5] The University reserves the right to make changes to course content, structure, teaching and assessment as outlined in the Admissions Policy.

The Royal Osteoporosis Society (ROS) has identified osteoporosis as one of the "biggest hidden health emergencies of our time" (ROS, 2024). Currently, 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men over the age of 50 will experience a fracture due to osteoporosis (ROS, 2024). Fragility fractures alone cost the NHS an estimated £4.6 billion annually (Svedbom *et al.*, 2013), with this figure expected to grow alongside the aging population. Predictions indicate a 25–30% rise in fractures by 2034 (Kanis *et al*., 2021). Despite the availability of life-changing treatments, osteoporosis remains underdiagnosed and undertreated. Approximately two-thirds of individuals with osteoporosis fail to access treatment due to late diagnosis and limited public awareness (Willers *et a*l., 2022). The course is designed to attract healthcare professionals seeking to expand their expertise and contribute to improved patient outcomes by addressing a national skills shortage and empower healthcare professionals to meet the growing demand for DXA-related services.

Students undertaking this course are expected to be highly motivated health care professionals with a desire to advance their own intellectual and academic knowledge balanced with the advancement and development of DXA practice, skills, abilities and competencies. Students are therefore required to be aware of their individual strengths and areas where development is needed. Reflection on personal and professional qualities is encouraged in order to further advance skills, abilities and proficiencies and to facilitate individual growth and advancement.

There is a drive from the College of Radiographers (CoR) to ensure that all enhanced practitioner posts are underpinned by a Master's level (or equivalent) qualification as outlined by the Society and College of Radiographer's Education and Career Framework (SCoR, 2023). This postgraduate certificate will allow you to increase your knowledge and skills in the specialist area of DXA. This is often a challenging area of practice due to the rising demand for services and autonomous role of the practitioner. It is anticipated that this course will allow you the opportunity to combine theoretical and clinical knowledge to your current practice, which will underpin the enhanced practitioner roles required as part of the four-tier structure within DXA.

Please note: Full completion of the course and subsequent academic award does **not** lead to automatic enhanced or advanced practitioner status.

Course Aims

This course aims to support students to develop:

1. An in-depth knowledge of osteoporosis, diseases affecting bone metabolism and the role of fracture liaison services.

2. The level of expertise associated with the role of an enhanced practitioner in DXA service, to include the formulation of written reports.

3. Interpersonal and communication skills, to effectively participate in multidisciplinary teams to provide optimal person-centred care and service to a range of service users.

Course Learning Outcomes

The following statements define what students graduating from the PgC DXA course will have been judged to have demonstrated in order to achieve the award. These statements, known as learning outcomes, have been formally approved as aligned with the generic qualification descriptor for level 7 awards as set out by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)[6].

1. Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the epidemiology, pathophysiology, clinical risk factors and clinical management and treatment of osteoporosis and other diseases affecting bone metabolism.

2. Analyse factors contributing to fracture risk and explain the role of DXA in assessing bone mineral density (BMD) and how to implement fracture prevention strategies.

3. Demonstrate efficient, safe practice and procedural independence during a range of DXA scans.

4. Critically evaluate the accuracy, reliability, and precision of DXA scanning, whilst demonstrating proficiency in scan analysis and applying enhanced quality assurance (QA) protocols to ensure optimal diagnostic outcomes.

5. Interpret clinical findings and formulate written DXA reports which meet the required legal, ethical and professional standards.

6. Critically appraise policies and procedures in relation to DXA scanning.

7. Critically evaluate own performance to ensure that best practice is achieved at all times whilst acknowledging the limitations of own skills and knowledge.

8. Actively contribute to and appreciate the roles within the multidisciplinary team, especially in relation to the fracture liaison service, and critically evaluate performance within the team

Course Design

The design of this course has been guided by the following QAA Benchmarks / Professional Standards / Competency Frameworks:

- College of Radiographers (CoR) Education and Career Framework (CoR, 2022)
- Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice in England (NHS England, 2017)
- QAA Characteristics Statement for Master's Degrees (2020)
- QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2024)

[6] As set out in the QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (2024)

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Course Structure

The PgC in DXA comprises of two modules at level 7.

Module Specifications for each of these modules are included within the course handbook, available to students online at the beginning of each academic year.

	Module	Credits	Module Type[7]
Level 7			
	Osteoporosis and bone disorders: Management and Fracture Prevention	30	M
	Analysing and Reporting DXA scans	30	M

Awards

At the end of your course and on successful completion of 60 credits you will achieve a postgraduate certificate in DXA.

Full completion of the course and subsequent academic award does not lead to automatic enhanced or advanced practitioner status for diagnostic radiographers.

Course Delivery

The course is delivered at the Ipswich campus of University of Suffolk. Students studying part-time on the PgC DXA course are likely to have approximately 20 contact hours per module which will be a mix of lectures, seminar and workshops. Students can also expect to have 25 hours of asynchronous online learning per module. Students will be expected to find their own placement and workplace mentor. Students will normally be expected to undertake 560 hours of independent study across the duration of the course but should be prepared for this to vary based on assignment deadlines and class exercises.

Course Assessment

A variety of assessments will be used on the course to enable students to experience and adapt to different assessment styles. The assessment methods used will be appropriate to assess each module's intended learning outcomes.

Course Team

The academic staff delivering this course are drawn from a team that includes teaching specialists and current practitioners. All staff are qualified in their subjects with their own specialist knowledge to contribute and are registered with the appropriate professional body (i.e. RCR or HCPC).

[7] Modules are designated as either mandatory (M), requisite (R) or optional (O). For definitions, see the Framework and

Course Costs

Students undertaking PgC Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry will be charged tuition fees as detailed below.

Student Group	Tuition Fees
Full-time UK/EU	Not applicable
Part-time UK/EU	£1,525 per 30 credit module
Full-time International	No applicable
Part-time International	£2,535 per 30 credit module

Payment of tuition fees is due at the time of enrolment and is managed in accordance with the Tuition Fee Policy.

Academic Framework and Regulations

This course is delivered according to the Framework and Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Awards and other academic policies and procedures of the University and published on the website.