

**Imperial College  
London**

**CPSSQ**



Centre for Patient Safety & Service Quality

# Experiences from MSc in Quality and Safety in healthcare

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# Overview

- Overview and aims of the course
- Setting up the MSc
- Details of the course
  - curriculum,
  - assessment
- Current student cohort
- Students' experience

# Course outline

- The MSc in Quality and Safety in Healthcare is a two year, part time course comprising a taught and a research component.
- The taught component is composed of 8 Modules (4 per year) which include lectures, workshops, tutorials and WebCT (an internet teaching tool) tasks. Each module consists of one week of full time face-to-face teaching.

The MSc in Quality and Safety in healthcare offers a sound theoretical background to the principles of clinical risk management, quality improvement and patient safety. We provide rigorous academic training, an introduction to appropriate research methods and practice, and the opportunity for intellectual development within a stimulating and supportive environment.

# Programme aims

- To produce graduates equipped to further careers in healthcare and in particular to enhance the safety of their own clinical practice.
- To provide a solid foundation for those who intend to go on to study for an MD or PhD;
- To develop understanding of processes involved in improving quality and safety;
- To provide a training in research skills;
- To provide a supportive learning environment;
- To attract highly motivated students, both from within the UK and from overseas;
- To develop new areas of teaching in response to the advance of scholarship and the needs of vocational training.

# MSc outcomes

- enhanced understanding of quality and safety related to students' discipline, working practice and healthcare in general,
- developed skills in the use of computing and statistics applied to healthcare,
- evidence of essential quality and safety skills when applying for higher consultant or managerial positions,
- gained further insight into the importance of leadership and teamwork when implementing change.

# Setting up a new MSc – preliminary stage

- Views from patient safety researchers and target audience – mixed
  - “excellent idea”
  - ” a whole MSc on safety!”
- Who is our audience?
  - are they interested
  - are they available and willing to do an MSc

# Administrative process at Imperial College:

- Academic content – peer reviewed
- European Standardisation of Degree courses
- Business case
  - What other courses are available in the UK
  - Fees – standard PG fees: £3240 / £22,400
  - Clinical v's non-clinical classification
- Target audience – mixed group
- First year; commenced in October 2007



## Target audience

Clinicians – doctors/nurses/pharmacists/Allied Health Professionals

Managers – risk, clinical governance

## Entrance requirements:

BSc 2i – minimum & at least 3 years experience in healthcare

College English language requirements

**Issue** – nurse training – traditionally was not a degree course

# Why do an MSc in Quality and Safety?

To consolidate / formalise my reading and knowledge

“I want formal training in case analysis”

“I want to do an MSc and this is exactly what I’m looking for”

“I have a clinical governance role and want to learn skills and to be able to influence staff to report and attend safety meetings”

# Delivery of the course

- Guest speakers – experts, e.g. NPSA, from other industries, senior NHS staff, etc.
- 8 week long modules (4 per year) of face-to-face teaching + distance learning
- Group work
- Support for students – supervisor for research project and personal tutor;
- Study and support skills
- Peer support – discussion groups, student representatives

# MSc modules

1. Introduction to Quality and Safety
2. Epidemiology and Information
3. Understanding Quality and Safety
4. Research methods and applied statistics
5. The Aftermath of an Incident
6. Improving Safety, Implementing Change
7. System and Organisational aspects of Patient Safety
8. Options module. Students select one further module from a list of options, e.g.:
  - a. Surgical Technology
  - b. The role of Education in promoting quality and safety
  - c. Science Communication

# 1 Introduction to quality and safety

This module provides a framework for the programme, addressing key issues in healthcare and policy which impact on clinical practice. The nature of the discipline and its components be outlined. The aim is to give students an understanding of the wider background and historical perspective within which more detailed study will take place.

## 2. Epidemiology and information

This module explores the various sources of information available and methods used to study the problem of risk and safety in healthcare. Students will gain an insight into how effective use of such information can be applied to audit, clinical risk, professional development and information services, leading to a significant decrease in mortality.

### **3. Understanding safety and quality**

This module builds on the previous one and includes documentation, continuity of care, multi disciplinary teams, ergonomics and design, incident reporting, investigation and analysis, safety culture, and prospective and proactive methods of risk reduction.

## **4. The aftermath of an incident**

This module covers a number of safety themes that are directly related to the effect of clinical incidents and adverse events on patients and staff.

## **5. Research methods and project**

This module will provide a general overview of research methods in healthcare and reinforce understanding of the importance of research for the evaluation of clinical practice. Research and learning skills associated with this module and the whole course is introduced at the beginning of the course.



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## **6. Improving Safety, Implementing change**

This module brings together the various themes in the earlier modules and considers recent local, national & international initiatives to improve safety in healthcare.

## **7. System and organisational aspects of quality and safety**

This module emphasises the importance on how organisational aspects affect quality and safety. In particular there is a focus on leadership and on the practical issues of quality and patient safety.

# Assessments and activities

- **Essays / reports associated with each module**
- WebCT (College intranet) – discussion groups between the face-to-face teaching modules
- Encouraged to keep a reflective diary
- Presentations – oral / posters
- **Portfolio – evidence and commentary**
- **Research project (50%)**
- **Exams (25%)**
- **Assessments (25%)**

# Challenges

- Teaching theory of an every day subject
- Experiences, attitudes and culture of the audience
- Mixed group – different needs, experiences and expectations
- PG study – after years in clinical practice; part-time while still in full-time employment
- Balance between work and study (and other life-events)
- Technical equipment – distance learning

## Current cohort of students (2007-2009)

- 15 students in total
- Physicians and anaesthetists
- Senior Nurses
- Pharmacists
- Managers
  
- England, Northern Ireland, Germany and Czech republic

# Student's experience and feedback - so far

- All very enthusiastic
- Positive feedback – particularly on guest speakers
- Enjoy the diversity of the group
- Some are from the same organisation

# Questions

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