

The Mental Health Associate Practitioner Pathway

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Introduction

A Mental Health Associate Practitioner programme was developed through collaboration between the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education at Kingston University and St George's, University of London and the Trusts.

The programme was delivered full time, over two years, with a 40/60 balance between theory and practice, with emphasis on work-based learning.

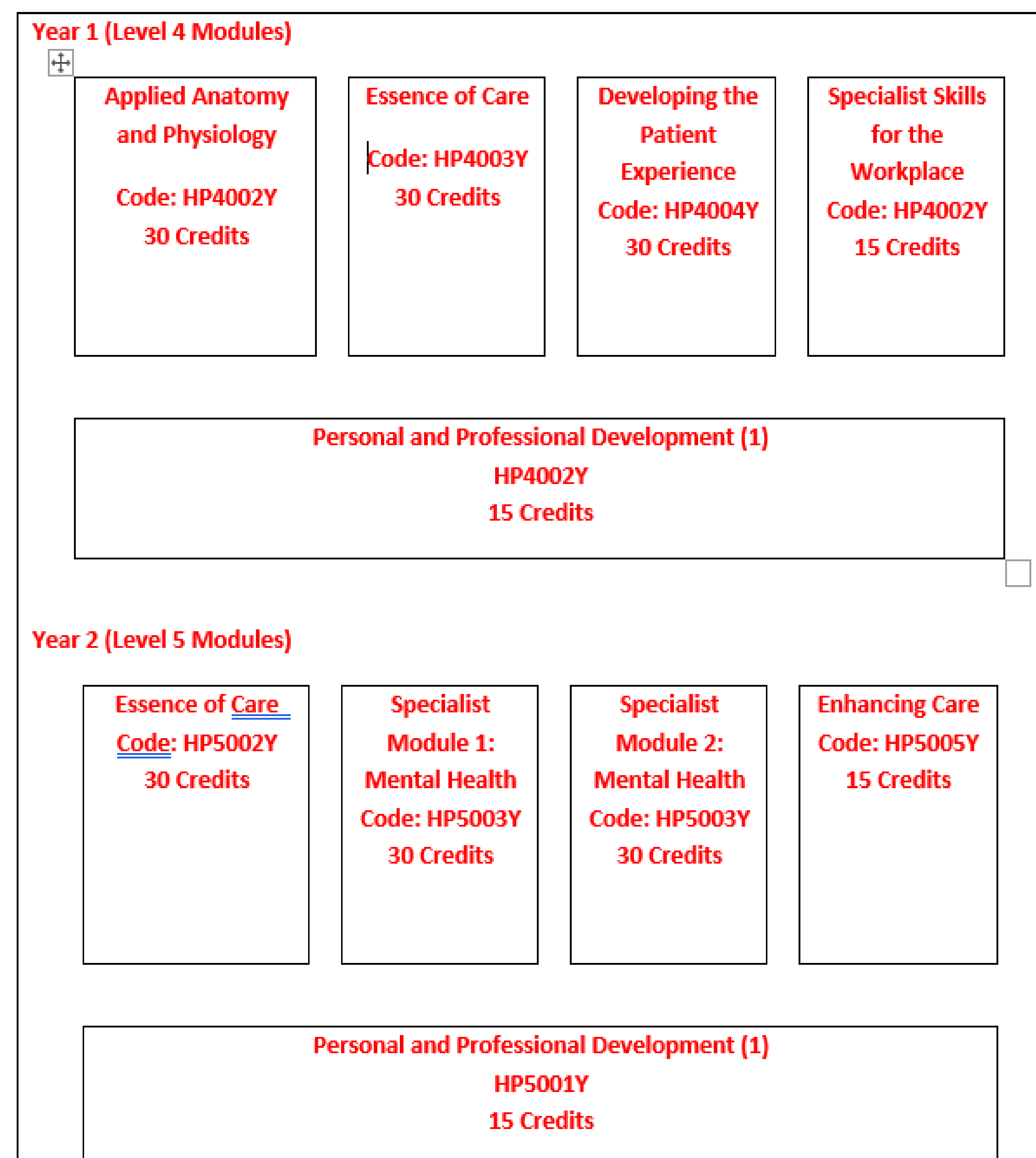
Aims

A programme evaluative research project was undertaken with the aim to measure the learners' engagement, perceptions of the value of the programme, the impact of the programme on learners' attitudes, knowledge and skills and the sustainability of the programme.

Methods

Longitudinal evaluative research, using mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design. Data was collected from the 7 learners through online questionnaires, at three different points in time: pre-programme, at mid-point and at the end of the programme. The questionnaires included quantitative and qualitative questions. SPSS versions 23 and 24 were used to analyse the quantitative data of the questionnaires. Content analyses were used to analyse the qualitative data.

Learning Pathway



Learners' Experience

'I have learned a lot, and grown in confidence for this reason. Also I have met a variety of people in different disciplines which I have benefited from.'

'Feel my knowledge of the area has improved substantially and I have benefited from meeting other health care professionals and learning how things are done in other parts of the trust, it has broadened my horizons.'

'I enjoyed the specific learning especially in physical health as I feel that this is something that is very important for me to expand my knowledge to use on an everyday basis'

Results

Table 1. Learners' perceptions of impact of the programme on their knowledge and understanding (Frequencies)

	No enhancement	Minor enhancement	Enhancement	Major enhancement
Knowledge of evidence-based practice	0	0	1	5
Knowledge of social care	0	0	1	5
Knowledge of principles of person-centred care	0	0	0	6
Knowledge of legal and ethical principles (for example professional values, safeguarding, respect, dignity)	0	0	1	5
Knowledge of clinical assessment (purpose, process, fundamentals, models)	0	0	1	5
Knowledge of care plan in mental health	0	0	0	6
Knowledge of collaborative working in mental health	0	0	0	6

Table 52. Learners' perceptions of impact of the programme on their skills (Frequencies)

	No enhancement	Minor enhancement	Enhancement	Major enhancement
Clinical skills for physical health	0	0	2	4
Clinical skills for mental health	0	0	0	6
Clinical assessment and care planning	0	0	1	5
Academic skills (for example writing, referencing)	0	0	0	6
IT skills (for example Word, PowerPoint)	0	0	4	2
Critical thinking skills	0	0	2	4
Reflective skills	0	0	0	6
Team working skills	0	0	2	4
Risk assessment	0	0	1	5
Promoting health	0	0	0	6
Psychosocial responses	0	0	1	5

Conclusions

Learners were asked to reflect on their engagement with the programme and its activities, on their perceptions of the value of the programme, and on the impact of the programme on their attitudes, knowledge and skills. They were also asked to reflect on the sustainability of the programme.

Findings revealed good levels of learners' engagement with the programme and its activities, positive perceptions of the value of the programme, and overall, the impact of the programme on their attitudes, knowledge and skills was perceived major, particularly around physical health care. The sustainability of the programme was also rated high.

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