

Apprenticeships Case Study

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**Advanced Clinical
Practitioner Masters
apprenticeship at Liverpool
University**



Team/Base: Physiotherapy OCATS service at Wolves

What prompted you to become an apprentice/apply for your apprenticeship?

I had previously completed a master's module in musculoskeletal trauma in 2017 and really enjoyed the return to higher education. It was a long time since I had completed my undergraduate degree (2002). I had spoken to colleagues who had started the same apprenticeship and felt it was a great way to continue my learning and help me take the next step in my career towards becoming an advanced practitioner. I had come up against barriers in the past with working part-time and missed out on opportunities that required full time commitment, so I was thrilled to be supported in applying for a part time apprenticeship.

Tell us about your role, what does a typical day look like?

I currently work as an advanced musculoskeletal physiotherapist.

I work in the OCATS team at Wolves, assessing and treating patients with musculoskeletal conditions. It is an outpatient service, and my day is made up of individual patient appointments and gym-based rehabilitation. I manage a mixed musculoskeletal caseload and I am part of the back pain pathway.

I work with my advanced practice colleagues to highlight patients who would benefit from musculoskeletal imaging and sometimes blood tests or injections and I liaise with GP's and first-contact practitioners as most of my referrals are from primary care. I also have some patients who have undergone orthopaedic or spinal surgery.

I am a certified Pilates instructor, and this helps me a lot in teaching exercises to my patients. I also refer patients to a range of physiotherapist led exercise classes and local leisure services to promote a healthy lifestyle and effective long-term management of chronic conditions.

What is the best thing about your apprenticeship?

I learn so much on the job and I am supported by great clinicians and mentors who are very knowledgeable and approachable. I enjoy the focussed time on my own professional development and dedicated time to attend university to complete level 7 modules.

I have regular progress meetings with a mentor and academic tutor to ensure my off the job training is helping me to develop within a knowledge and skills framework.

What would you say to others thinking about an apprenticeship?

I would say that apprenticeships are a great way to assist with succession planning for services, by retaining experienced clinicians and supporting them to develop in the work place. I would never have gone on to complete a full masters without this opportunity.

My mentors at Bridgewater have been great role models working in careers that I aspire to work in at the end of my apprenticeship. It is challenging working and studying at the same time as being a parent, so the protected off the job training is an essential part.

My improved knowledge also benefits my patients, and I feel more equipped to deal with complex pathologies and pass on what I have learned to the staff that I supervise.