

ACPWH education and awards

Change to the eligibility requirements for membership of ACPWH

The ACPWH executive committee has recently approved a change to the eligibility requirements for membership of the Association. Membership has always been open to Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) members who have completed one of the 'long' courses listed on the website (www.acpwh.org.uk/index.php?topic=membership&page=categories). These courses were all developed by or in conjunction with ACPWH.

Until the 1980s, most CSP members graduated with either the MCSP qualification or with a graduate diploma in physiotherapy. Since the 1990s, however, all physiotherapists have graduated with a degree. As a result, the demand for post-registration provision and qualification has changed from postgraduate courses at Level 3 (equivalent to the final year of a first degree) to higher degrees at Master's level and beyond.

From 1999–2003, the women's health course was approved by the University of Bradford at Level 3. At that time, it was known as 'Physiotherapy in Women's Health I and II'. In 2004, this course was developed further and approved as part of the Master of Science (MSc) in rehabilitation studies and is now run as two separate modules: 'Theory of Physiotherapy in Women's Health' and 'Practice of Physiotherapy in Women's Health'. The two modules are run in separate semesters, with students completing both within an academic year. Each module has a value of 20 credits at Master's level (a complete MSc requires 180 credits).

Similar developments have occurred with the continence course. The 'Graduate Certificate in Professional Development in Health: Continence' was validated at Level 3 by the University of East London from 1996 to 2004, the University of Bradford expressed an interest in developing a continence programme similar to their women's health course, and the first cohort commenced study in 2005. The 'Continence for Physiotherapists' programme is also part

of the MSc in rehabilitation studies, and consists of theory and practice modules, which are completed over the course of an academic year. Again, each module has a value of 20 credits.

Until recently, CSP members who had successfully completed both the theory and practice modules of either course were eligible for ACPWH membership. However, the University of Bradford has always encouraged students to complete a third module of 20 credits to give students a recognized award, the postgraduate certificate. Following discussion on the subject at the February meeting of the education sub-committee (ESC), a proposal was put forward to the executive committee. This proposal recommended that, in order for a CSP member to be eligible for membership of the Association in the future, she or he would need to have acquired the full 60 credits required for the award of either postgraduate certificate ('Physiotherapy in Women's Health' or 'Continence for Physiotherapists'). In other words, she or he would need to complete the third (optional) module before applying for ACPWH membership.

One reason for this proposal was that both the women's health and continence courses were reviewed during 2007–2008. This review involved ACPWH as well as the academic and clinical staff involved with the curricula. Both courses were approved by the University of Bradford as part of the MSc programme for a further 5 years (from 2008).

A second reason for the proposal was so that the award of a postgraduate certificate from the University of Bradford could be compared with awards from other academic institutions. For some time, CSP members have been able to apply for the ACPWH membership through the 'portfolio route'. This involves 'the submission of a portfolio or evidence of published works relevant to the speciality of women's health and judged by the Association to be of an acceptable standard'. The ESC felt that increasing our membership eligibility requirements would provide a standard to which portfolio applicants could clearly relate.

A third reason was that ACPWH has always aimed to set high standards of education and to encourage physiotherapists to improve their specialist therapeutic skills in order to provide the best care for women.

Both of our approved programmes have evolved significantly over the past 10 years. Students have risen to the challenges and increasing academic demands required to demonstrate their continuing development as leaders within the speciality and the Association is proud of the achievements of its members.

The executive committee passed the proposal made by the ESC, and therefore, all students enrolling for either the continence or women's health programmes commencing from September 2008 will need to complete the postgraduate certificate. *This does not affect our current members or those who are already enrolled on either course – only future members.*

The University of Bradford now offers the potential for women's health physiotherapists to complete an entire MSc solely within the speciality, and this will be acknowledged in the title given to their final award.

Details of both postgraduate programmes are available on the ACPWH website (www.acpwh.org.uk/index.php?topic=courses&page=courses). Links are available for you to download the programme specifications. Further information and application forms are also available from Sandra Shallcross (School of Health Studies Recruitment; e-mail: soh-recruitment@bradford.ac.uk; Tel: 01274 236367). The MSc programme leader is Patsy Rochester (e-mail: p.rochester@bradford.ac.uk; Tel: 01274 236326).

Alternatively, you could contact the course coordinators/clinical lecturers, who are also ACPWH members:

- 'Physiotherapy for Women's Health': Gill Brook (e-mail: gill.brook@lineone.net) or Ann Johnson (e-mail: organised@annie100.co.uk); and
- 'Continence for Physiotherapists': Teresa Cook (e-mail: T.Cook1@bradford.ac.uk).

Teresa Cook

*Honorary visiting lecturer
University of Bradford
Bradford*

*ACPWH workshop tutor and education
subcommittee member
Independent specialist women's health
physiotherapist*

Routes to membership of the ACPWH

The candidate will have fulfilled one of the following:

- (1) completed an ACPWH-approved postgraduate course;
- (2) submitted acceptable postgraduate research evidence/publications; or
- (3) provided an acceptable portfolio of evidence showing a breadth of experience of women's health-related topics/male continence issues.

Criteria for membership of the ACPWH

1. Completion of an ACPWH-approved postgraduate course

The usual route to membership is by successful completion of one of the ACPWH-approved programmes provided at the University of Bradford, Bradford. The approved programmes are currently either the 'Physiotherapy in Women's Health' or 'Continence for Physiotherapists' postgraduate certificates.

2. A Master's or PhD thesis/publication(s)

If this is the chosen route, the candidate's application must show evidence of the following:

- An 'in depth' knowledge or experience of a particular area of physiotherapeutic health-care provision in women's health or male bladder/bowel dysfunction is essential. 'In depth' would be defined as extensive research in or knowledge of a range of physiotherapeutic interventions in the field of women's health/male incontinence. It is recognized that research is a lengthy process, and therefore, the submitted papers may not include all areas that would be covered if gaining full membership by completion of the recognized validated course. The research evidence must be, at least, at peer-recognized level. 'Extensive' has not been defined because specifying the number of papers may be restrictive; a Master's degree in an appropriate subject may be acceptable.

Submission by publication:

- The articles/papers/research should be of a post-registration level.
- The articles should have been published in at least one peer-recognized journal.

- The topics covered by the submitted papers should further the knowledge of physiotherapy in women's health/male incontinence.

3. Portfolio of evidence

An alternative route for chartered physiotherapists with an interest in, and knowledge of, physiotherapy in women's health is by submission of a portfolio of evidence of practice in which:

- the candidate will provide evidence of a 'breadth of knowledge' and/or experience of physiotherapeutic healthcare provision in the field of women's health/male bladder/bowel dysfunction. 'Breadth of knowledge' may be described as knowledge and experience of most of the areas covered by the minimum criteria for membership, or similar to the combination of the content of the two courses presently provided by the University of Bradford.

Submission by portfolio:

- Experience should be evidence-based and this will obviously reflect the applicant's work practice. However, since this is an application for full membership, effort must be made to demonstrate a wide breadth of experience. Ideally, the application should encompass *all aspects of women's health*, i.e. obstetrics, gynaecology, and also bladder/bowel dysfunction in both women and men. Each aspect should be covered comprehensively.
- However, in certain circumstances, it may be possible to gain membership by demonstrating a greater depth of experience in fewer fields.

When evaluation of a submission under this category is considered, the topics included for assessment should reflect those that are covered in either of the two courses presently provided by the University of Bradford.

Assessment of the submission. This will be undertaken by two assessors who are blind to the name of the applicant and are members of the education subcommittee (ESC) of the ACPWH. In cases where the assessors do not agree, the chairman of the ESC will adjudicate.

Evaluation will differ for the two types of submission.

The research officer of ACPWH will be one of those responsible for assessing submissions under category 2.

The chairman of the ESC will retain the submitted document.

Outcome. Submission:

- satisfies criteria for membership as stated above;
- needs to be resubmitted with additions or amendments suggested by the assessors; or
- does not fulfil the criteria as stated above.

Dame Josephine Barnes Bursary

Ownership of the bursary

The bursary is owned by and used by the ACPWH for educational and research needs, and for promoting women's health and continence in this country and abroad.

The bursary fund is topped up each year. Up to £3000 per year will be made available for this award and this amount will be reviewed every 2 years by the executive committee.

The implementation of the awards will be overseen by a small group from the executive and the ESC that will normally include the ACPWH chairman and treasurer.

Applications to the bursary

Application forms are available electronically from the ACPWH website. Applications will be considered every 6 months and should normally be submitted, via e-mail, to the chairman before the closing dates of 1 January and 1 July.

Applications – whether single or as a group – can be retrospective or anticipatory.

The applicants must produce information about the course/research that they are embarking on, along with all cost implications. There should also be evidence of applying, or the intention to apply, elsewhere for additional funding.

In all cases, *the maximum amount granted shall be £500, and there is no minimum amount that shall be awarded.*

Use of the bursary

It will be made available for use in the following ways:

(1) Part-funding of courses:

- (a) to help towards subsidizing up to four places on the validated university courses that are recognized by the ACPWH as a route to *full* membership of the Association (in order to qualify for this

- assistance, the candidate must be a member of the Association and will be required to pledge a further year's membership on completion of the course);
- (b) to part-fund places on other appropriate courses/conferences in this country or abroad; and
 - (c) to give financial help to those doing a Master's degree relevant to women's health and continence.
- (2) The development of research in women's health and continence:
- (a) to give funding towards research projects relevant to women's health and continence;
 - (b) to fund/part-fund a course which would enable a project or a piece of research to be undertaken;
 - (c) to encourage evidence-based practice (e.g. an ACPWH annual workshop on how to get started with a research project); this would be at member's request; and
 - (d) to promote a project nationally for the benefit of physiotherapists working in women's health or continence (e.g. standardized outcome measures or research organized country-wide; i.e. small groups bringing information to a central point).
- (3) Directive of the Association:
- (a) fund an issue that emerges from the discussion groups at the Annual Conference that the members consider needs addressing; and
 - (b) enable members to travel abroad where they would be acting as ambassadors for the ACPWH, and also promoting of women's health and/or continence.

Ann Bird Prize

Anne Bird was chairman of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (now the ACPWH) from 1985 to 1988. As superintendent of Bristol Royal Infirmary, Bristol, she created a centre of excellence for obstetric and gynaecological physiotherapy. The Anne Bird Prize commemorates the life of Anne Bird by encouraging and recognizing in others those qualities that she valued.

It will normally be awarded annually to an individual, or individuals, who show overall

excellence, professionalism and empathy in their educational development within the Association. The successful nominee will also have made a special contribution to an ACPWH post-registration course or to physiotherapy in women's health.

Each nominee will be nominated by three people, one of whom must be an Association member. Nominations shall be confidential.

Nominations should be completed on forms, available from the website (www.acpwh.org.uk) or from the secretary, and returned to the ACPWH chairman by 1 July.

Margie Polden Student Bursary

Margie Polden FCSP, who died in 1998, worked at the Hammersmith Hospital in London, where she initiated and developed physiotherapy in obstetrics and gynaecology. Within the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology – now the ACPWH – she made an enormous contribution to the education of physiotherapists and other professionals.

Never afraid to be combative, Margie vigorously and knowledgeably debated and discussed issues with clinical colleagues, lectured, and wrote for professional publications. She also had the ability to reach out to the public with witty, pertinent and informative articles and talks on women's health issues. In doing so, she furthered the cause, raised the profile of physiotherapy in obstetrics and gynaecology, and made a real impact on the lives of countless women.

Through her work and books, Margie, a loved and respected member of the Association, influenced and educated numerous physiotherapy students. A bursary was established in memory of Margie by the generosity of her husband that is intended to fund a place at the ACPWH conference for a student.

This bursary will be awarded annually to a physiotherapy student who is able to demonstrate an interest in the field of women's health, obstetrics and gynaecology, and is keen to develop that interest further.

The applicant should be an undergraduate, or have qualified during the same year as the conference.

An application form may be found on the ACPWH website and should be returned by e-mail to the chairman by 1 July.

ACPWH-approved bladder and bowel dysfunction workshop

A new ACPWH-approved workshop entitled 'Physiotherapy for Bladder and Bowel Dysfunction – A Practical Workshop' was piloted in February 2008.

Course objectives

The objectives of the course are:

- (1) to introduce evidence-based information on pelvic floor therapy for bladder and bowel dysfunction for physiotherapists working/interested in women's health; and
- (2) to provide tutor-led practical treatment opportunities.

Learning objectives

On completion of the workshop, in relation to bladder and bowel dysfunction, the participants should:

- be able to deliver an effective treatment plan;

- be aware of appropriate treatment modalities;
- gain or increase clinical skills in the use of these modalities;
- have greater understanding of drug therapy and issues concerning prescribing and physiotherapy; and
- be aware of and conform to national standards of physiotherapy practice particularly relating to women's health.

It is expected that course participants will have completed the ACPWH-approved workshops on pelvic floor assessment and examination for both female urinary incontinence and anorectal dysfunction.

For up-to-date information on course dates and venues, please see the ACPWH website.

If you are interested in hosting this workshop, please contact Ruth Hawkes (ruthhawkes@uk-consultants.co.uk).

Ros Thomas