



**THE SOCIETY OF  
MUSCULOSKELETAL  
MEDICINE**  
putting theory into practice

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## Introduction

This paper sets out to map the content, learning and teaching strategies adopted within the Society of Musculoskeletal Medicine's modules, to the capabilities identified within the 'Musculoskeletal core capabilities framework for first point of contact practitioners'.

It also aligns with other key reference points to demonstrate the important and relevant role of the Society's educational programme towards the mobilisation and development of an effective and confident First Contact Practitioner (FCP) workforce.

Practitioners can be signposted to appropriate modules to facilitate the development of the advanced skills required for their FCP role in musculoskeletal practice.

## Key reference points

- 'Musculoskeletal core capabilities framework for first point of contact practitioners' (the framework)
- Advanced clinical practice: 4 Pillars of Practice - clinical practice, facilitating learning, leadership, evidence, research and development
- First Contact Practitioner (FCP) workforce development interventions (Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, July 2019)

## Society of Musculoskeletal Medicine

The specialism of musculoskeletal medicine (previously orthopaedic medicine) is founded on the seminal work of Dr James Cyriax MRCP (1904-1985), Honorary Consultant Physician for many years to the Department of Physical Medicine, St Thomas' Hospital, London. The 'Cyriax Approach' continues to be a globally understood term within musculoskeletal practice.

The Society of Orthopaedic Medicine, an educational charity and limited company, was established in 1979 to continue to promote the theory and practice of musculoskeletal medicine through its educational courses. It was renamed the Society of Musculoskeletal Medicine (SOMM) in 2013.

The overarching aim of the Society is to continue to develop and integrate the specialism into musculoskeletal practice for the ultimate benefit of patients.

The Society provides courses of high educational quality to enable clinicians to develop competence in the assessment and clinical diagnosis of musculoskeletal conditions and to

apply effective treatment to the soft tissue conditions encountered in musculoskeletal practice.

It provides a flexible postgraduate pathway to support the professional development of all practitioners involved in the management of musculoskeletal disorders. Most modules (individual foundation units and advanced modules) may be taken as 'stand-alone', or practitioners can choose to work through the modules towards the MSc Musculoskeletal Medicine, validated by Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and accredited by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy.

The current programme of courses accommodates and solves many of the development needs of advanced practitioners, across a range of health professions, and most notably for practitioners working in or preparing for FCP roles in musculoskeletal practice.

### Considerations

It is anticipated that advanced practitioners within, or working towards, a FCP role will be expected to reflect on their job role to be able to identify areas where they would benefit from further training. Practitioners may draw from the support of appropriate educational and clinical mentors towards the identification of necessary training requirements for their role.

The capability framework, and specifically designed development needs analysis tools, drawn from the four pillars of practice, can provide a useful basis against which practitioners can develop their professional development plan.

Students on the Society's musculoskeletal medicine course programme are encouraged to maintain a reflective professional development portfolio throughout their educational journey and to develop a professional development plan. This applies to single stand-alone modules or throughout the pathway towards the MSc Musculoskeletal Medicine. Critical reflection is promoted as an important component of self-directed learning.

The domains identified within the framework provide categories for the capabilities that underpin first contact practice. Communication and person-centred care (Domain A) are at the heart of the musculoskeletal medicine approach; prevention and self-management (Domain C) are included within the discussions on rehabilitation within all courses; evidence-based practice (Domain D) underpins the whole approach.

Notwithstanding, in mapping the Society's courses to the framework, the precise focus is on the capabilities listed under **Domain B (Capabilities 3, 4 and 5)**, **Domain C (Capabilities 8, 9, 11 and 13)** and **Domain D (Capability 14)**.

An outline of each module can be found on the Society's website ([www.sommcourses.org](http://www.sommcourses.org)). The full **Module Descriptors** for each module provided by the Society are available from the Society Office: [admin@sommcourses.org](mailto:admin@sommcourses.org). The content, learning outcomes, and the variety of learning, teaching and assessment strategies of each module are identified within the descriptors.

An outline of the complete MSc Musculoskeletal Medicine programme is included as an Appendix to this document.

### Summary of SOMM's educational provision

The Society's skills-based modules have a high practical component to facilitate the development of relevant and pragmatic skills in history-taking, physical assessment and clinical diagnosis.

Students become competent in:

- knowing what's relevant and what's *not* relevant to ask
- knowing which physical tests to perform
- ruling out 'red flags' and non-musculoskeletal conditions
- deciding what further investigations are needed
- knowing when to refer

The modules aim to develop the clinical reasoning and practical skills required for autonomous advanced practice, within the context of the multidisciplinary team.

Assessment, clinical diagnosis and treatment techniques for soft tissue lesions are taught within the foundation module and developed within the advanced modules.

The injection therapy module, for example, provides an example of a relevant advanced module for the development of first contact practice management, intervention and prevention capabilities. The inclusion of pharmacotherapy and the stringent assessment procedures ensure the emergence of a competent and confident practitioner.

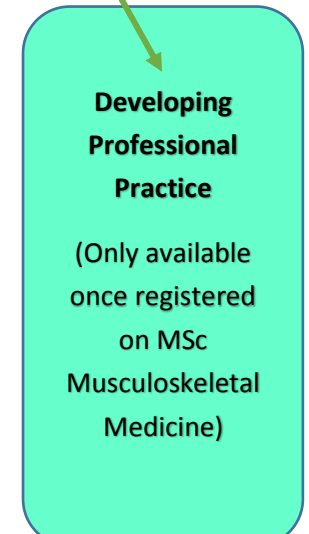
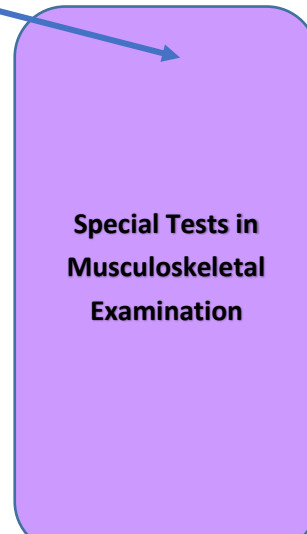
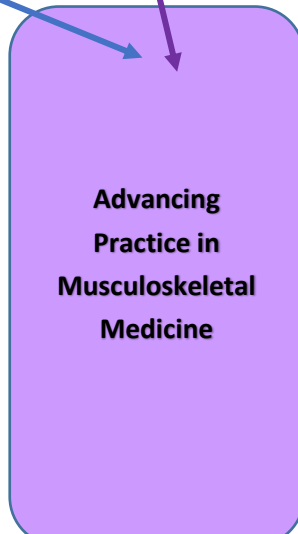
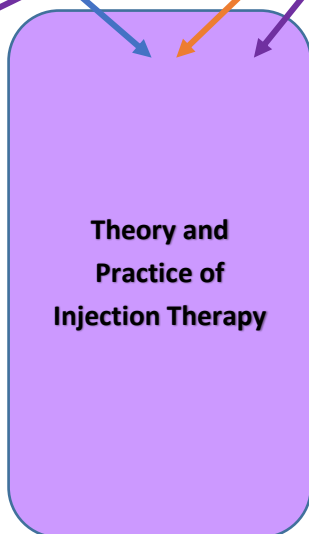
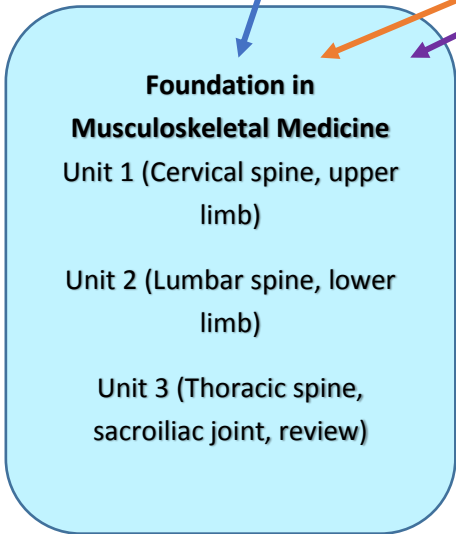
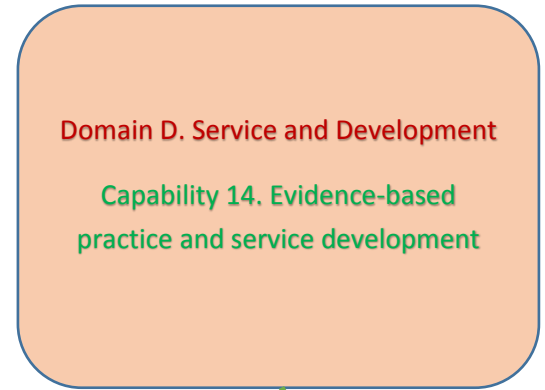
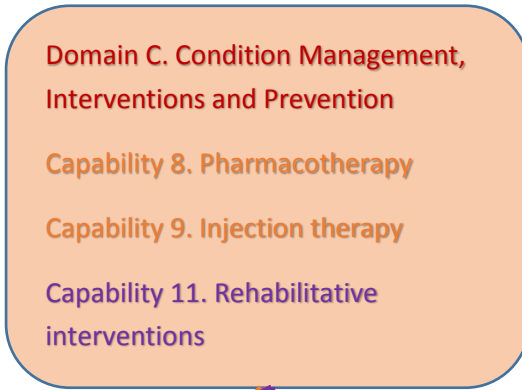
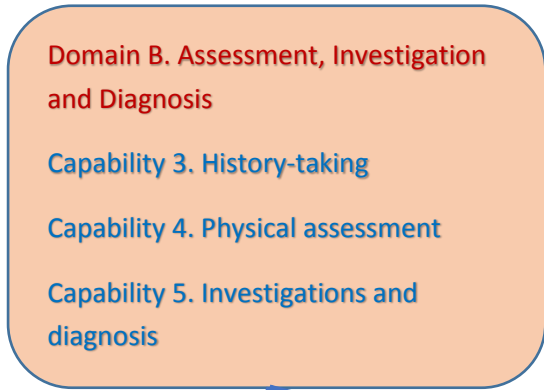
The musculoskeletal medicine approach is based on best available evidence and expert clinical opinion and skills of literature searching and critical appraisal are developed within all modules, to inculcate students' research-mindedness to underpin musculoskeletal practice. Research skills are further developed within the MSc Musculoskeletal Medicine programme's Research Methods and Research Dissertation modules.

The foundation and advanced modules accommodate the range of starting points for advanced practitioners, to allow the development of a personalised professional development plan towards first contact practice.

The chart on the following page links the capabilities identified above to the Society's modules that have been designed to develop the necessary skills for advanced and first contact practice.

By mapping the content, learning and teaching strategies adopted within the Society of Musculoskeletal Medicine's modules, to the capabilities identified within the 'Musculoskeletal core capabilities framework for first point of contact practitioners', practitioners can be signposted to appropriate modules to facilitate the development of the advanced skills required for their FCP role in musculoskeletal practice.

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**Society of Musculoskeletal Medicine; September 2019**



Capabilities identified within the 'Musculoskeletal core capabilities framework for first point of contact practitioners', signposted to SOMM modules

● Domain     
 ● Foundation module     
 ● Advanced module     
 ● MSc module

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## Appendix

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(Please note: Master's level is denoted as Level 11 in Scotland and Level 7 in the rest of the UK)

Optional modules may be selected from the advanced modules. Appropriate master's level modules already completed with other universities may be introduced into the programme through recognition of prior learning (RPL).

### Programme structure diagram

