

# Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Education (PGCME), The University of Buckingham

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1) Who is the PGCME for?

The PGCME is for colleagues who want to grow as **confident, reflective, and future-focused educators in healthcare**. Whether your role is primarily clinical, academic, or in professional services, the programme is designed to support you in shaping excellent learning experiences for students and trainees.

Participants typically include:

- **Healthcare leaders and policymakers** developing educational strategy.
- **Clinicians** who teach or supervise students and trainees in clinical settings.
- **Clinical academics** balancing research, education, and patient care.
- **Professional services staff** (e.g. library, digital education, or learning support colleagues) who contribute directly to student learning.

### 2) Is the PGCME an international programme?

Yes! The **Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Education (PGCME)** is a **globally competitive qualification**, delivered fully online to ensure accessibility for professionals wherever they are based.

The programme carries **dual international recognition**:

- It is **accredited by Advance HE**, meaning that successful graduates who meet the required teaching practice experience will be awarded **Fellowship of the Advance HE (FHEA)**, a widely respected mark of professional recognition in higher education across the world.
- Graduates of the full programme will also be eligible for **Accreditation Plus membership of the Academy of Medical Educators (AoME)**, a leading professional body for healthcare educators with international reach.

Together, these awards ensure that the PGCME is not only a postgraduate qualification from a UK university, but also a pathway to **professional recognition that is valued internationally**.

### 3) What makes the PGCME at Buckingham distinctive?

- **Fully online, flexible delivery** designed for busy healthcare educators.
- **Two intakes per year** (September and February) for maximum flexibility.
- Recognition from **two major professional bodies**: Advance HE (FHEA, if eligible) and the Academy of Medical Educators (Accreditation Plus).
- A supportive, **reflective learning community** led by experienced medical educators.

This combination makes the PGCME both **academically rigorous** and **professionally transformative**.

### 4) What will I gain from completing the PGCME?

On successful completion of both modules (60 credits, Level 7), you will receive:

- The **Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Education (PGCME)** from the University of Buckingham.
- Eligibility for **Fellowship of Advance HE (FHEA)**, provided you meet Advance HE's strict practice requirements (see FAQ 8).
- **Accreditation Plus membership of the Academy of Medical Educators (AoME)**, giving you national recognition as a healthcare educator.

### 5) How is the programme delivered?

The PGCME is delivered **fully online**, combining:

- **Synchronous sessions** (live teaching and interactive workshops).
- **Asynchronous activities** (readings, discussion forums, reflective tasks).

This flexible format is designed to fit around busy professional and clinical schedules, wherever you are based.

### 6) How is the programme structured?

The programme consists of **two compulsory 30-credit modules** at Level 7:

- **Module 1 (15 weeks)**, taken in your first term (either September or February).
- **Module 2 (15 weeks)**, taken in the following term.

Each term starts on the **first Monday of September or February**, so:

- **September starters** take Module 1 (Sept–Dec), then Module 2 (Feb–June).
- **February starters** take Module 1 (Feb–June), then Module 2 (Sept–Dec).

This structure allows you to focus on one module at a time, with a **planned break** in between. The pause provides space not only to reflect and apply your learning in practice, but also to manage your wider professional and personal commitments, helping you balance study with the realities of a busy career.

## 7) Do I get any recognition after Module 1?

Recognition is awarded only after completing both modules. There is no formal award after Module 1, though many participants find that their learning already enriches their practice from the very first module.

## 8) What are the requirements for Fellowship of Advance HE (FHEA)?

Not every graduate automatically receives FHEA. Because the PGCME is accredited by **Advance HE**, their strict requirements apply. To be eligible for FHEA, you must:

- Have a **minimum of six months' experience in teaching, training, or supporting learning within healthcare education settings prior to starting the programme.**
- Provide a **minimum of 80 hours of planned teaching and/or supporting teaching and learning over the duration of the programme.** These 80 hours must involve **direct student contact.** Activities that are primarily administrative in nature will **not** count towards this requirement.

These requirements are non-negotiable and are set by Advance HE, not by the University.

We strongly encourage participants to seek Advance HE recognition once they meet these criteria. Achieving FHEA is an internationally respected mark of professional standing that demonstrates you meet the Professional Standards Framework (PSF) at Descriptor 2 level.

## 9) How will I be supported when I am ready to apply for FHEA?

The PGCME is fully **mapped to the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF) at Descriptor 2**, so successful graduates will have developed the knowledge, skills and evidence required to make a strong FHEA application.

Applicants must **apply to Advance HE independently** and pay the relevant Advance HE application fee. While the University cannot guarantee the outcome, the programme team can normally act as a **referee/supporting statement** for eligible graduates and provide general guidance on preparing an application when the time is right.

## 10) What is Accreditation Plus with the Academy of Medical Educators (AoME)?

Accreditation Plus is a **streamlined route to professional membership** of the Academy of Medical Educators. Because the PGCME is AoME-accredited, you will be automatically eligible for **Accreditation Plus membership** once you complete the programme.

This means you gain:

- Professional recognition mapped against **AoME Professional Standards for Medical Educators**.
- The ability to use post-nominal letters once your membership is confirmed.
- Access to a national network of medical educators, resources, and events.

## 11) How much time will I need to commit each week?

The time you'll need to dedicate will vary depending on your role, workload, and personal study style. Some colleagues find they work more quickly, while others prefer to take more time to reflect.

As a guide, we **recommend setting aside around 6–10 hours per week** for engaging with recorded materials, joining live online sessions, taking part in discussions, preparing assignments, and reflecting on your teaching or support of learning. The programme is designed with flexibility in mind, so you can balance your studies alongside your professional and personal commitments.

## 12) What kinds of assessment will I complete?

Assessments are **reflective and practice-based**, designed to connect theory with your real teaching. They include:

- Reflective narratives on your educational practice.
- Critical engagement with relevant literature.
- Structured reflections on feedback and observation.

There are **no exams**. Assessments are supported with clear rubrics, examples, and feedback.

## 13) Who teaches on the programme?

The PGCME is led by experienced **medical educators and senior academics** with international expertise in healthcare education, technology-enhanced learning, and

assessment. The teaching team are also clinicians, who understand both the realities of clinical practice and the challenges of educating in healthcare settings.

#### 14) Do I need line-manager approval to join?

For most participants, formal line-manager approval is not required in order to apply for the PGCME. However, we do recommend discussing your plans with your line manager (or equivalent) so that you are supported to engage fully with the programme alongside your professional role.

If you are working towards **Advance HE Fellowship (FHEA) recognition**, you will also need workplace confirmation that you are engaged and can evidence a minimum of 80 hours of practice during the programme, in line with Advance HE requirements.

#### 15) What support will I receive during the programme?

You will be fully supported throughout your PGCME journey. We want you to feel confident, connected, and well-prepared to succeed. Support includes:

- **Dedicated programme team** led by medical educators with clinical backgrounds, who combine deep expertise in healthcare education with lived understanding of clinical realities. They will guide your learning, provide regular feedback, and be available to discuss your progress.
- **Structured Observation Support:** your Peer Observer will be trained by the programme team to ensure the process is constructive, consistent, and supportive.
- **Education Community of Practice** you will join a vibrant cross-disciplinary network of colleagues, giving you opportunities to share ideas, reflect, and learn together.
- **Resources and digital platforms** access to the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), library services, and tailored guidance on using digital tools for teaching and learning.
- **Wellbeing and academic support** the University offers a wide range of services to help you balance study with professional and personal commitments, ensuring you feel supported throughout.

#### 16) What is Peer Observation of Teaching, and what will I be required to do?

As part of the PGCME, **you will have one of your teaching/educational activities observed** by a trained peer observer; **you will not be required to observe others**. The process is **developmental and supportive** (not appraisal/PDR) and can take place in lectures, small-group teaching, clinical settings, or online sessions.

Observers are experienced educators (often with clinical backgrounds) who complete a short **observer induction** to ensure a consistent, fair and constructive experience. You'll receive clear guidance and a simple pro-forma to help you plan the session and capture feedback.

### 17) Is the observation itself assessed?

**No.** The observation itself is not assessed. Its purpose is developmental to give you constructive feedback on your teaching. What is assessed is your reflection on the process: how you interpret the feedback, the insights you gain, and how you plan to apply them to improve your practice.

### 18) Can adjustments be made for disability or specific learning needs?

Yes. The University is committed to inclusivity. Please let the programme team know at the earliest opportunity so that reasonable adjustments can be put in place.

### 19) What happens if my circumstances change during the programme?

If your role changes or you face challenges (e.g. illness, parental leave), please contact the programme team. Deferrals or adjustments can often be made under University regulations.

### 20) Can I complete the PGCME more quickly?

At present, the PGCME is delivered over **two consecutive 15-week terms**. We have designed this pace deliberately to allow participants to **consolidate their knowledge, practise new skills, and reflect meaningfully** while balancing the demands of professional and personal commitments. Many of our participants are busy clinicians or healthcare professionals, and this structure provides the necessary time to engage fully without rushing the learning process.

While a shorter '*fast-track*' route is **not currently offered**, we keep the programme under regular review. If there is sufficient demand in future, we may explore a carefully planned accelerated option that maintains the same academic quality and professional standards.