
Institute of Public Care

Certificate in Commissioning and Purchasing for Public Care

Programme and Student Handbook 2023 - 2024

HECoS code: 100476

1. Introduction and course overview

The Certificate in Commissioning and Purchasing for Public Care is a postgraduate short course provided by the Institute of Public Care (IPC), which is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Oxford Brookes University.

At IPC we provide applied research and evaluation, consultancy, and training to help NHS trusts, government bodies, councils, charities and commercial organisations make a positive impact on people’s health and wellbeing. If you would like to find out more about the work of IPC visit <https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/>.

This four-day short course is aimed at commissioners in public care organisations. It is designed to support commissioners to implement the national agenda and develop good commissioning practice. Course materials are regularly updated to take account of new developments in public care. The course is set in the context of guidance and legislation by the Department of Health and Social Care and/or Department for Education as well as the Welsh Government and Scottish Government where relevant: we bespoke the course to meet the needs of our clients.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information that underpins the design, delivery and management of your course. Please familiarise yourself with the contents and to talk to us if you have any questions. This isn’t the only handbook available to you. Alongside this handbook there is also the [University Handbook](#), which gives you information about the University’s policies and regulations as well as student support and wellbeing services available to you.

The course comprises online or face-to-face group learning sessions, delivered over a 3 – 6 week period, as well as self-study. You can choose to accredit your learning from this short course and gain a formal postgraduate level certificate of credit – worth 20 CATS credits at postgraduate level – to help with your Continuing Professional Development (CPD). To do this you will need to attend additional support sessions and complete assessed project work. There is an additional fee for accreditation. For more information about our courses and how to apply visit <https://ipc.brookes.ac.uk/what-we-do/our-services/training-development>.

Module Title:	Certificate in Commissioning and Purchasing for Public Care
Module Number:	WFPC7004
Higher Education Classification of Subjects:	100476

2. Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course you will demonstrate the following Brookes Graduate Attributes at postgraduate level:

Learning Outcome	Graduate Attribute
Have an in-depth knowledge of the national agenda for commissioning and purchasing within public care, and a critical understanding of its application in practice	Academic literacy
Demonstrate a critical understanding of the principles and theories of commissioning and purchasing	Academic literacy
Critically analyse your organisation or service's commissioning and purchasing arrangements	Academic literacy
Use evidence-informed learning to implement good commissioning or purchasing practice	Research literacy
Demonstrate independent learning skills, including critical reflection on individual and organisational learning and practice	Critical self-awareness and personal literacy
Engage in online learning activities, developing confidence in e-learning abilities	Digital and information literacy

3. Entry requirements

The course is aimed at commissioners in public care organisations. You will normally be expected to:

- Have a professional public care or degree level qualification, or similar, and/or to have substantial experience of practice or management in public care services.
- Undertake commissioning, purchasing or contracting in an NHS organisation, local authority or related agency.
- Have the support of your employing agency.

Your employing agency is expected to provide you with appropriate support whilst undertaking the course, particularly if you are undertaking the accredited award. Your line manager will need to support you by offering advice, support/supervision, and agreement to a work-based commissioning or purchasing project. We require candidates undertaking accreditation to complete a written agreement with their employer/manager prior to enrolling on the certificate of credit to agree:

- The involvement of your line manager, or a suitable substitute, in supporting you throughout the course. Specifically, they will be involved in discussions about and supervision of the work-based project.
- That free time for self-study and completion of the assignment will be made available to you.
- That any specific access or communication needs you have that are relevant to the course will be notified to IPC.
- That you will attend all the taught and facilitated support days of the programme.
- That you will meet the deadlines set for the submission of the assessed work.
- That you will have access to the internet, to be able to participate in all the on-line learning activities, download resources and submit the assignment.

A copy of the written agreement is shown in appendix 1. Work-based learning is an essential element of the course and the entry criteria therefore include the need for students to be employed. If you change employment during the course it will be important to review with your new employer, and IPC, arrangements for your continuation on the course, and for the completion of a new written agreement. Although IPC will endeavour to accommodate changed employment circumstances of students, it may not be possible for you to complete the course if you change employment during it, particularly if you leave the sector.

IPC welcome discussion as early as possible on any specific communication or access needs that students may have in relation to this course. Whether these concern the venue or coursework please contact the IPC [Course Administrator](#) to flag your needs.

4. Course content

The course draws on the Institute's consultancy and management development experience in commissioning and service design with local authorities, NHS organisations and with a wide range of providers. You will come away from the group learning sessions having worked through each stage of the IPC framework for commissioning and purchasing, and tackled a series of realistic exercises designed to illustrate the techniques and tools available for effective commissioning. You will have opportunities to address your contribution in the context of the changing national agenda and to take stock and reflect on current practice; as well as being provided with practical tools to implement change where required.

The content will be delivered through a mix of presentations and practical sessions that explore models, guidance and principles, consider practice, and help you think about their application. The learning style will be collaborative with an emphasis on sharing approaches that work and practical experiences.

Electronic versions of the learning materials will be made available to you shortly before the start of the course for you to download and for you to print should you want hard copies of the materials. The learning sessions cover:

- The relevant national commissioning agenda for public care
- The IPC Commissioning Framework: structured organisational self-analysis
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion through commissioning activities
- Collaborative commissioning and working with a wide range of partners
- Methods for managing knowledge and analysing the needs of the local population, including needs analysis and systems mapping
- Understanding the costs of care services
- Delivering effective change in the commissioning process, including decommissioning services
- Market shaping and influencing, including approaches to managing provider relationships
- Using outcome-based commissioning to develop innovative service responses
- Engaging people with care and support needs in commissioning
- Exploration of the issues facing commissioners in relation to delivering more personalised services
- Effective purchasing of services based on clear specifications and appropriate contracting and tendering arrangements
- Monitoring and review in commissioning and contracting
- Analysis of the role of the commissioner and exploring commissioning skills

4.1. Notional learning hours

If undertaking accreditation, you can expect to spend the following amount of time on the course:

- Seminars and workshops - 24 hours
- Group and individual support sessions - 10 hours
- Directed independent study - 34 hours
- Supervision – 6 hours
- Work-based project – 126 hours

As you can see in the above notional learning hours, students are expected to complete additional and independent learning and research to inform their learning, contributions to training days and the assignment. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure they complete the work and research expected between each training days and support sessions.

5. Course assessment

It is worth familiarising yourself with the University's [Regulations for Study](#). They provide information about the grades that apply to your assessments, time limits and how your final award classification will be calculated, as well as other important regulations and links to related procedures and guidance.

Assessment encompasses all judgements made about your work and/or your skills, abilities and progress, and the associated provision of feedback. There are different

forms of assessment. Formative assessment does not contribute to your overall grade and is mainly intended to help you learn i.e. giving you feedback which you can use to improve your future performance. Summative assessment is marked work and counts towards your final grade if you are undertaking the accredited award. Your summative assessment is a work-based commissioning project, which can be tailored to meet the needs of your employing agency: there are no examinations.

We use a range of formative assessment tasks, including:

- A marking exercise to assess fictitious or previous years' student work against the assessment scheme for the summative assessment.
- An informal presentation – as part of the group support session – to discuss the project that you will use for the summative assessment.
- A formative but compulsory submission of a project outline and project plan for your proposed project(s) that you will use for the summative assessment.

You will have online group briefings about the summative assessment task and two individual virtual tutorials with your [Academic Adviser](#). The aim of which is to help you to understand the summative assessment task, agree the work-based activity that you will undertake for the summative assessment, and apply effective study skills.

You will be expected to submit your project outline and project plan to the University's Virtual Learning Environment in advance of your first tutorial. Your line manager, or a suitable substitute, should agree with you the proposed topic(s) for the work-based project before the tutorial. Your Academic Adviser will give you feedback from the tutorial and on your project outline and plan. You will also have the opportunity to have another 'virtual' tutorial with your Academic Adviser a few weeks before the hand-in date for your summative assessment.

5.1. The assessment task

The summative assessment task is to:

Submit a written assignment, of between 4,000 and 5,000 words, which explains and reflects upon a commissioning or purchasing project that you have undertaken. The rationale for the work must be clearly set out in the context of national policy and best practice, and draws on a critical analysis of the current commissioning and purchasing arrangements in your local organisation or service, including equality, diversity and inclusion priorities. The project must have been accepted by your line manager as appropriate to the needs of your organisation or service, and have been undertaken during the timeframe course. Supporting information will be expected that gives evidence of the project activities and implementation of good commissioning or purchasing practice. References will be expected to key local or national documents and other relevant literature to demonstrate that you have undertaken wider reading and/or research.

The length of the assignment is limited by a set number of words to contribute towards the development of writing skills and to ensure all work is assessed

equitably. We therefore require you to complete your assignment within the number of words specified in the assignment brief: between 4,000 and 5,000 words. There is no leeway above the maximum wordage allowed. If in doubt, you should discuss this with your Academic Adviser before submission. The final word count should be clearly indicated on your assignment Template.

The word count refers to the main body of your assignment and does not include the assignment title, reference list or any appendices. The word count does include headings and sub headings, footnotes, tables and in-text citations, but not diagrams. Appendices themselves will not be marked. However, inappropriate use of appendices will be taken into consideration when awarding the final mark.

You will be given a specific hand-in date for the assignment. An assignment template giving guidance about the assessment criteria, as well as other learning material including the current course reading list, is available for you to download from the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). The assessment criteria and their weighting are:

1. Provide a rationale for the development of the project, drawing on a critical understanding of commissioning and purchasing good practice and national guidance – 20%.
2. Demonstrate appropriate commissioning or purchasing practice – 20%.
3. Critically evaluate the effectiveness of the activities undertaken and their impact on commissioning or purchasing practice within your team and/or organisation – 20%.
4. Provide a reflective commentary that demonstrates personal development and learning – 20%.
5. Present your work clearly – 10%.
6. Demonstrate good academic practice applicable to the work-based project – 10%.

We require you to submit your work electronically, on the assignment template, via the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle). We also require you to submit the assignment text to Turnitin and to report your Turnitin originality score on the assignment template. Turnitin is a web-based tool that supports the development of good academic practice when preparing written work for assessment. This text-matching tool allows academic staff to check assignments for improper use of sources or potential plagiarism by comparing it against continuously up-dated databases (including web-pages and other student work).

You will be provided with feedback on your assignment template, which will indicate how well you have done and summarise the strengths and weaknesses of your work.

5.2. Grades, marking and moderation

The pass mark for the assignment and hence for the whole award is 50%, and the following grades apply:

- 70% and above is a Distinction
- 60 – 69% is a Merit

- 50 – 59% is a Pass
- 0 – 49% is a Fail

Your work will be assessed on a percentage basis and a [grade](#) will be given. Your overall mark will be the weighted average of the marks given to the assessment criteria. A grading matrix is available for you to download from the University's Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle), which defines the required performance level for each assessment criterion.

You will receive detailed and constructive feedback based on the assessment criteria. We strive to give you this feedback within three weeks of the hand-in date. We will write comments on the assignment template explaining what you have done well and what can be improved. If you do not pass an assignment we will endeavour to explain what you need to do to be successful when you resubmit it. We encourage you to use any feedback on your work you receive as part of the process of developing your academic skills.

If your submission does not pass first time you will be allowed to resubmit the assignment once more. Your Academic Adviser or the IPC Course Administrator, in consultation with you, will set a new deadline for the re-submission of your assignment. If successful in a re-assessment the maximum grade awarded for the assignment is a Pass of 50%. Failure to resubmit the work or to pass the assessment, upon reassessment, will mean that you do not pass the course. The University policy on Resits and Retakes can be found here: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/your-studies/resits-and-retakes/>.

5.2.1. Fairness in Assessment

University [assessment processes](#) ensure that assessment is rigorous, of an appropriate standard and fair, and a key role in this is that of the internal moderator and the External Examiner, who ensures that the standards used to assess students are comparable with other universities:

- Each assessment is written so that students can show they have achieved the learning outcomes for the module and for the whole programme, and the range, type and timing of assessment have been carefully chosen to enable students to become independent and reflective learners.
- Tasks and questions are set by the Module Leader, internally moderated (checked by another member of staff) and sent to the External Examiner to ensure that they are appropriate for assessment of the module learning outcomes and that the instructions and marking criteria are clear.
- Student work is marked, then a sample of assessments is moderated by an internal moderator to ensure that equal standards of marking are applied to all students. Following internal moderation, a sample of work is reviewed by our External Examiner so that they can monitor standards and ensure that the marking is consistent.
- The University adopts a policy of anonymous marking where possible. However, in this programme, due to the nature of the summative assessments your assignments will not be able to be marked anonymously.

- The Examination Committee comprises the IPC Director, Module Leaders, tutors and the External Examiner. It meets regularly to approve the assignment results. It is the role of the Examination Committee to grant final approval of the individual marks on each module and to recommend the awarding of final qualifications. On completion of marking, therefore, the provisional grade for each module will be reported to you on proviso that this is subject to the approval of the Examination Committee. Initial results therefore may be subject to change.
- At the end of each academic year External Examiners submit reports to the University which are published on the Programme's Moodle Site. The name of the External Examiner and institution/organisation at which they are employed is included in the report, but this information is provided for transparency and not for the purposes of direct communication with the External Examiner.

5.3. Exceptional circumstances

You should submit your assignment by the deadline set. However, the University recognises that, on occasions, you may be affected by serious personal difficulties which may affect your ability to engage with your studies, and negatively impact your performance in assessments. The [exceptional circumstances process](#) aims to ensure that students are not unfairly disadvantaged in these circumstances.

If you are experiencing exceptional circumstances beyond your control, which are impacting your studies and affecting your performance in assessment, you may be eligible for an allowance, such as the extension of a deadline or the opportunity to retake an assessment. Information on different [types of exceptional circumstances allowances](#) and the [procedures](#) to follow in order to make an application are available on our student web pages. Please make your application as soon as possible. Do not leave it until after the submission deadline has passed.

5.4. Academic practice

You must demonstrate academic integrity in your studies and in the work you produce. A range of support and guidance is available to help you do this, so please ensure you are aware of the expectations before embarking on an assessment. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are taken very seriously, as this has the potential to undermine the value of the University's awards.

All allegations of cheating will therefore be investigated by the Student Investigation and Resolution Team, through the [Academic Conduct procedures](#). A range of penalties may be imposed for those found to have breached the regulations, including expulsion or the removal of an academic award for the most serious cases.

If you are not too confident in the accuracy of your written English, you may want to ask someone to help you by checking your work. However, it is important that this is not done in such a way that you are committing academic misconduct, which could result in disciplinary action. University [guidance about proofreading](#) is available. In addition, if a checking or proofreading service is used, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences requires you to declare this at the front of your work, giving the name of the person who did this for you.

5.4.1. Use of AI Tools

Your responsibility to do your own work and give credit to others for their work applies to whatever is used in the production of assignments, including sources or Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT. [Guidance on the use of AI](#).

If you use any AI tools for your assessment, you need to state your use in a declaration form in Moodle when you submit your work. This is similar to referencing your sources in your reference list. In the declaration, you need to specify which tools you have used and how you have used them in your assignment (for example, what you asked the tool to do). You should also check with your Module Leader to see if AI tools can be used for your assessment as there may be some assessments where AI tools cannot be used. Undeclared, deceptive use of AI tools is not allowed, and may lead to an academic conduct investigation.

5.5. Confidentiality

IPC may be required to report on students' attendance on the course, progress in submitting the assessment, and results to their employing agency. However, the content of assessed work will only be accessed by Oxford Brookes University staff or our External Examiner and will not be made available for others to read outside this community without your permission.

6. Your voice

Detailed evaluation of student experience is an important and continuing element of the course. Therefore, the course will be regularly monitored to record your views. A formal evaluation form will be used as well as on-going informal interviews to discuss content, materials, exercises, administration, venue or any other issues. Evaluation is an opportunity for you to comment on the positive and negative aspects of the course, the performance of the teaching staff and the design of the course. Evaluation helps us to check the teaching and learning experience and to improve the quality of the course.

The management of the course is the responsibility of the course management team, which is led by the IPC Director. The team will hold regular internal meetings to discuss any urgent changes and the management of the course, and the results of the evaluations are discussed as part of the Subject Committee.

6.1. Student representation

We encourage students to become involved with their course via a system of Student Representation. Student Representatives have the opportunity to input to course development sessions and evaluations. Your Module Leader will be able to give you further information.

6.2. Complaints and appeals

We hope that your time with us is a happy one, and your programme of study lives up to your expectations, but we understand that things sometimes go wrong, and we welcome the opportunity to put them right. If an aspect of our provision falls below expectations, please bring it to the attention of a member of IPC staff. If they cannot resolve the problem through these local procedures, there is a formal University [complaints process](#) through which your complaint will be investigated by the Student Investigation and Resolution Team.

An [academic appeal](#) is an appeal against the decision of an examination committee, and may be made on limited grounds (excluding academic judgement). If you believe that an assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations governing the programme and have evidence that one of those grounds applies, you may make an appeal through the procedure which you can find on the [Student Investigation and Resolution](#) webpages. The [Brookes Union Advice Service](#) provides independent advice on many aspects of your student experience, including how to make a complaint or academic appeal.

7. Student support

7.1. IPC tutors and administrators

7.1.1. IPC Director

Management of the overall IPC course programme, including concerns and complaints, is the responsibility of the IPC Course Director - Fiona Richardson can be contacted on 01865 790312 and by email at frichardson@brookes.ac.uk.

7.1.2. IPC programme administrators

The administration of all IPC courses is dealt with by the programme administrators - Sasha Carter and Lynne Bennett can be contacted on 01865 488353 and by email at ipc_courses@brookes.ac.uk.

7.1.3. Module leader

Each course will have a named module leader who will be responsible for the delivery of the taught course and should be your first point of contact for questions relating to the taught content.

7.1.4. Academic Adviser

You will be allocated an [Academic Adviser](#) at the start of your course. Your Academic Adviser is a key source of academic advice and guidance throughout your course. Ask your Academic Adviser if you are unsure about any of the requirements of this programme or if situations arise which affect your ability to study or to

undertake work for assessment. You will have two virtual tutorials with your Academic Adviser, although you can also ask for additional support if necessary.

7.2. Study support

As well as the team in IPC, we have a range of professional services teams, who are committed to helping our students to make the most of their University experience and achieve their best possible results.

The [Student Central Advice Team](#) can help with all sorts of queries; and information about processes and procedures relating to your course, such as what to do if you need to take time out.

The [Centre for Academic Development](#) can provide advice and guidance to enable you to study effectively and do your best in assessment. They offer one to one tutorials and online resources and workshops on a range of academic study skills which will help you express your own ideas and reach your full academic potential. It's worth having a browse on the [Centre for Academic Development home page](#) to get an idea of what they have to offer. The Centre also offers an online Moodle course on [academic integrity](#) so that you can learn about good academic practice and avoid making common mistakes which could lead to allegations of plagiarism.

If you have a disability or a specific learning difficulty which means you may be entitled to reasonable adjustments to enable you to complete your assessments fairly, please contact the [Inclusive Support Service](#) for an assessment of your needs.

Be proactive, and please do take advantage of the advice and guidance on offer – don't wait until you feel that you are struggling to keep up with your studies. We have an extensive support network for students at Brookes - find out more about the support available on the [Student Support page](#).

7.3. Learning resources

7.3.1. The Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and Email

At Oxford Brookes University we use a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is powered by Moodle, to allow you to engage in learning in locations, times and at a pace that suits you. Moodle has been designed to complement your face to face seminars, it is the medium through which you will:

- Access your course learning materials
- Find help
- Use on-line discussion forums
- Submit your work to be assessed, including project plans and assignments
- Receive feedback on your assignment(s)

There are a series of videos and documents to help you use Brookes Virtual that can be found at [Getting Started with Moodle](#).

When you enrol with Oxford Brookes University you automatically get assigned a Brookes email account hosted by Gmail. This means that you will have an @Brookes.ac.uk email address and can access the suite of Google Apps such as the Google Calendar.

Your user name will be your Brookes student number and your password will be sent to you. You will receive feedback on your work via Moodle and you will be alerted to this by an automated email to your Brookes email account. You will need to either look at your Brookes email account or automatically forward on emails to it to another email address that you do use. For help visit: <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/it/>.

7.3.2. Library

You will have the use of all onsite as well as online Oxford Brookes University Library facilities. The onsite libraries have an extensive range of health, welfare, and social care texts and journals. The library also provides access to a wide range of online resources, including databases and thousands of full-text electronic journal titles, many of which you can access from home or work: access is via the [Library home page](#). Library staff are always happy to help you with queries about finding information. The Subject Librarians for Health and Social Care can be contacted on healthcarelibrarians@brookes.ac.uk.



Certificate in Commissioning and Purchasing for Public Care

Student and Employing Agency Agreement

1. This agreement sets out the commitments of, the employing agency, and, the participant to the Oxford Brookes University Certificate in Commissioning and Purchasing for Public Care. It is designed to ensure that both parties are clear about the requirements of the course and needs to be completed and signed when booking on the course.
2. The employing agency will:
 - a) Pay the course fees set by Oxford Brookes University.
 - b) Ensure the participant has access to the internet and is able to participate in all the on-line learning activities.
 - c) Support the participant with any specific access or communication needs they may have.
 - d) Make available sufficient learning time to help the participant to complete the assignment to the deadline.
 - e) Support the participant throughout the course. Specifically, the participant's line manager, or a suitable substitute, will be involved in discussions to agree the work-based assessment topic.
3. The course participant will:
 - a) Access the internet to participate in all the on-line learning activities, download resources and submit the assignment.
 - b) Notify IPC of any relevant access or communication needs they may have in relation to this course.
 - c) Undertake the background reading and self-study necessary to meet the requirements of the course.
 - d) Agree the topic for the assessed work-based project with their line manager, or a suitable substitute.
 - e) Meet the deadline for submission of the assignment.

Signed: Participant

.....On behalf of employing agency

.....Date

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public care

Trusted partner in public care

The Institute of Public Care is part of Oxford Brookes University. We provide applied research and evaluation, consultancy, and training to help NHS trusts, government bodies, councils, charities and commercial organisations make a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing.

For more information

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