

# Using your FLP Study Budget

## Guidance on how to select a course

### Introduction

During your Future Leaders Programme (FLP) year you will be given a study budget of £3700 to use towards your development and learning. This is reviewed annually and revised based on mean PG Cert course fees published.

The study budget is intended for fellows to undertake a postgraduate certificate (PG Cert) which is underpinned by leadership development. This means if you are **not** doing a PG Cert explicitly in leadership, you need to choose something with a leadership module. Most fellows undertake a PG Cert in some form of clinical or healthcare leadership. Fellows can choose a PG Cert that is appropriate for their own career path and development, the only stipulation is that it **must** contain a leadership module or component.

A small minority of fellows may already have a PG Cert in Leadership, and they may therefore choose an academic component that complements this – either progressing to a Masters or undertaking a different form of leadership development course.

We are providing you with the information now, so you have plenty of time to consider your options. There is no requirement to look at anything prior to your start date, but please be aware some universities close their applications before August. All study leave needs to be agreed in advance and signed off by Dr Susy Stirling.

Things to bear in mind when choosing what is right for you:

- What are your goals, personal development and learning needs for this year?
  - Which course would help you achieve them?
- What is the cost – there is large difference in course costs, and you may find you have to self-fund some of the costs if the study budget does not cover it all. Also consider that you may want to use the remainder of your budget towards additional things such as

conferences throughout the year (some conferences may be funded in addition by the FLP).

- Be cautious of additional 'admin' costs of some of the university courses, some can add on extra costs which may take you over the budget and will need self-funding.
- Does face to face or online learning suit you better, or would you prefer a hybrid approach?
- How do you like to be assessed, do you prefer assignments, exams, presentations, or a mixture?
- Please be aware of application closing dates, some universities close their applications prior to the start of your FLP year.
- Please make sure to check the fees for 26/27 qualification through the official website of the university you are planning to apply for or contact the university if needed as fees do sometimes change.

Attached is a summary of informal feedback regarding some of the courses attended in the last cohort. This is of course, not an exhaustive list of all that are available, so please look around for something that will best fit your learning needs.

## **Appendix 1: Informal Feedback from Current Fellows 2025/2026**

### **Postgraduate Leadership Qualifications**

#### **Sheffield Hallam – Pg Certificate in HealthCare Leadership**

| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Online                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| Course Outline    | 4 modules (1 mandatory and 3 you can choose), Leadership in Practice, Leading People and Teams, Planning Service Improvement and Leadership in Context. Each module has a 3000-word assignment. There are weekly seminars for each module which are recorded so you can catch up if you miss them. The seminars vary from 1 to 2 hours and are at different times for each module.                                        |
| Assessment Method | x4 3000-word essays                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Pros              | The content has really helped me with thinking about applying my leadership style to my work area and things I may try to implement when I return. It also helped me plan a presentation for a job interview as I used some of the theory and models I had learnt. The flexibility of it being online has really worked for me. Being able to catch up when convenient worked well. Overall, I have learnt a lot from it! |
| Cons              | There is some repetition across the modules and organisation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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|                      | has been variable. The quality of teaching varies between the lecturers. I found for some of the modules I was better at self-learning than attending or watching the recordings. I did have to chase one of the modules as it didn't appear on blackboard and could have missed the start if I hadn't noticed. The engagement from the rest of the cohort is variable across the modules. Leading People and teams seemed to have lots of people really engaged and interested, however the other 3 felt a struggle at times. The workload is quite heavy compared to some other PG Certs. Some of the modules overlap and start before one has ended. As long as you have good time management it is doable. |
| Would you recommend? | Yes, on reflection I am glad I did this course. It has challenged me but that's a good thing. Just be prepared for a lot of pre and post seminar reading and preparation. There is a lot of content!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Estimated Cost       | £3540 - figures for 2025/26                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

### Newcastle University– PGCert Medical Education

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid    | Online, one optional F2F study day per module (3 modules in year)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Course Outline       | Essays / presentation depending on module                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Assessment Method    | Essays / presentation depending on module                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Pros                 | Friendly tutors, drop-in sessions, assignment tutorials, platform easy to use. Clear instructions for assignments.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Cons                 | Mostly online so very limited F2F/real time interaction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Would you recommend? | Yes - helpful for gaining understanding of educational theories, has module on leadership - thinking about communication styles, leadership theory, conflict, psychological safety. Other modules available - assessment in medical education, teaching and learning in the workplace, current educational issues |
| Estimated Cost       | £3,900                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### Queens University Belfast– PGCert Clinical Education

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|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Entirely Online                                              |
| Course Outline    | It takes place every other Tuesday evening, starting at 1830 |

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|                      | until about 2030. 2 Modules split across Autumn and Spring terms. Each module has 2 essays for assessment, approx. 1500 and 2500 words each (so 4 essays in total)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Assessment Method    | Each module has 2 essays for assessment, approx. 1500 and 2500 words each (so 4 essays in total)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Pros                 | Cheap - £2,455 for 2026/27. This allowed me to also complete the CMI Level 7 award in Strategic Management, a PGCert qualification in Management. This was an additional £1000 so covered by the remaining study budget, also through Queen's University, and started just before the main PGCert finished. Essays are not that demanding, most of the content is covered in the biweekly seminars. Overall, I think it required less work than other fellows' PGCerts                                                                                               |
| Cons                 | The latter part of the second module has not been particularly beneficial for me. Speaking to other fellows, I would say that there are other courses that give more educational benefit, but I'm still glad I've done it, and it has changed how I approach teaching and assessments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Would you recommend? | Yes - for me the priority was getting a qualification(s) for my CV without being too taxing or expensive. It definitely fit the bill for this. I went for an education PGcert because I felt that it gave me a demonstrable qualification in teaching for my CV, and that the CLF year would act as a qualification in leadership. Combining that with the opportunity to do the CMI Level 7 (which I wasn't aware was an option when I started) means I also get a PGCert qualification in Management. So, from a mercenary point of view, its been excellent value |
| Estimated Cost       | £2455 for main PgCert (+approx. another £1000 for the CMI Level 7)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### University of Cambridge– Medical Education, Leadership and Research

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | 3 x face to face 4 day weeks (one in Oct/Nov, one in January and one in May). With another day in June face to face. Modules submitted online with lots of online resources posted too.                                                                   |
| Course Outline    | Each term covers one aspect of the PGcert - leadership then research then education.<br><br>Each module is assessed differently - either reflective essay/presentation of QIP, writing a pretend research protocol, teaching module not yet been assessed |

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| Assessment Method    | Each module is assessed differently - either reflective essay/presentation of QIP, writing a pretend research protocol, teaching module not yet been assessed                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Pros                 | Good quality teaching with the chance to get to know your course colleagues. One other FLP from my cohort is also on the course so that was nice.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Cons                 | Returning from maternity leave and coordinating the face-to-face weeks around childcare.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Would you recommend? | Yes, I would. More expensive than the study budget covers for, so be aware of this.<br><br>Very useful to have access to journals, Cambridge university online courses, resources.<br><br>I chose it as I wanted a leadership PGcert but also wanted a research element to be included as thinking about this being a potential component of my future consultant job plan. |
| Estimated Cost       | £5950 for the course fees                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### University of Bradford - Leadership in Health & Social Care

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|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Hybrid - Weekly online lectures.<br>4 face-to-face study days per module (8 in total during the PGCert).<br>4 one-hour webinars per module.                                                                                                    |
| Course Outline    | Module 1*: Health and Social Care Leadership - 30min assessed presentation<br><br>Module 2*: Managing People in Health and Social Care - 4000-word essay.<br><br>*Module 1 is mandatory; Module 2 you get a choice between an HR or QIP module |
| Assessment Method | Module 1*: Health and Social Care Leadership - 30min assessed presentation<br><br>Module 2*: Managing People in Health and Social Care - 4000-word essay.                                                                                      |
| Pros              | Very supportive and friendly staff. Relatively easy assessment, especially the first module presentation. Nice to have discussions with peers during face-to-face days.                                                                        |
| Cons              | Not the highest quality teaching - I can't say I've learned as much as I expected to. Some of the teaching material has been outdated. The online lectures aren't always the most engaging.                                                    |

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|                      | My main issue has been that the cohort has a diverse range of prior experience, with some students bringing substantial leadership and sector knowledge, while others are earlier in their professional development and/or adapting to studying in England. At times, teaching appears to be pitched towards supporting those newer to the subject, which can limit opportunities for more advanced engagement for experienced learners. |
| Would you recommend? | A good option if you want some face-to-face study days, and relatively easy assessments with really friendly and supportive staff. However, if you have high academic standards, want to challenge yourself or really grasp a better understanding of Leadership in Health and Social Care, then it's probably not for you.                                                                                                              |
| Estimated Cost       | £3,852                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### University of Hull - Healthcare Leadership

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Online                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Course Outline    | <p>2 modules - first module is focused on your leadership development and skills, offers specific leadership theory and insight into leadership styles and approaches.</p> <p>The assessment method for this is two 2,500-word assignments.</p> <p>The first one focuses on your experience as a leader and your leadership styles in the format of a structured reflection.</p> <p>The second one focuses on a development plan, you identify areas for improvement as a leader and how these changes could be implemented.</p> <p>The second module is focused on change, innovation and problem solving. It focuses on your approaches to bring about change and change management theory.</p> <p>The assessment method for this is two 2,500-word assignments.</p> <p>The first one focuses on your experience of change in healthcare as either the one facilitating change or experiencing change, format is again a structured reflection.</p> <p>The second one focuses on how you would bring about and implement changes through a project proposal.</p> |

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| Assessment Method    | Module 1 – x2 2500 assignment<br>Module 2 - x2 2500 assignment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Pros                 | Very good online resources, easily accessible. The content is released weekly, and you have complete access to refer back to online lectures and resources as often as you want too. You also have a weekly session with your tutor and tutor group to go through content and if you cannot attend you can watch back via teams (also have the option to watch other tutor group sessions). Tutors are also friendly and easy to contact. |
| Cons                 | All content and sessions are virtual so don't really get to interact very much with other students.<br><br>Balancing commitments from FLP role and then assignment writing can be challenging but just need to be clear with your supervisor about the time you need.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Would you recommend? | Yes - it's a good course and covers a lot of content, teaching is good and easy to understand, and it also fits within the FLP budget.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Estimated Cost       | £3400                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

### University of Sheffield - Medical Education

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid    | 6 days face to face, rest online submission based                                                                                                                                                           |
| Course Outline       | 3 modules across the year, each with x2 face-to-face full day sessions, followed by weekly blackboards discussion boards with your assigned small group.                                                    |
| Assessment Method    | Each module is assessed by an essay.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Pros                 | Good teachers, first modules is based on creating a teaching session of your choice. The essays are easy to write with support of blackboard discussions in groups. Less time consuming than other PGCerts. |
| Cons                 | Academic writing is expected. If you do not engage with the blackboard discussions, the essays are more difficult to write.                                                                                 |
| Would you recommend? | I would recommend, it has been insightful but also wasn't too demanding.                                                                                                                                    |
| Estimated Cost       | £200 over the sponsorship amount given from FLP/OOPE.                                                                                                                                                       |

### Lancaster University - PGCert Healthcare Leadership

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Online only |
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| Course Outline       | Three modules with one essay-based assessment for each module.            |
| Assessment Method    | Three modules with one essay-based assessment for each module.            |
| Pros                 | It was cheap and there is no F2F requirement.                             |
| Cons                 | Limited teaching, no structure to course, modules hard to pass.           |
| Would you recommend? | It is the cheapest of the PGCerts which is about all it has going for it. |
| Estimated Cost       | £3,200                                                                    |

### University of Bradford - PG Cert Leadership in Health and Social Care

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Hybrid                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Course Outline    | <p>2x 30 Credit Modules. Modules: First term - Health and Social Care Leadership (mandatory), Second term - Leading Change and Service Improvement in Health and Social Care or Managing People in Health and Social Care. There were other modules such as Understanding Health and Social Care Policy but not able to choose this as overlapping with the mandatory module in the first term.</p> <p>Each module follows a structure of online lectures (1 hour/week, occasionally 2 hours/week) supplemented by reading list. There are four F2F workshops per module, grouped as two back-to-back days. These include going over module content, group discussions or new lectures supporting the learnt material. These were better for Managing People module vs Leadership module.</p> |
| Assessment Method | Assessment: Health and Social Care Leadership – 30-minute presentation; Managing People in Health and Social Care - 4000-word essay; Service Improvement in Health and Social Care – 500-word poster.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Pros              | <p>Module leads are very supportive and approachable.</p> <p>Workshops were a great opportunity to see people, meet other healthcare professionals and see the other CLFs doing the course (nice break from working from home and a good catch-up). Bradford University is very nice, nice cafes and a good library! Assessments seem very reasonable and relevant, especially the presentation. Only 2 assessments in</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|                      | the whole academic year - less workload than other pg certs with more frequent assessment.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Cons                 | The course is for both UK postgraduates and international students. There was a difference in experience and academic standard between the two groups but they still graded with the same system. This also impacted group discussions within the room and classroom morale and etiquette (for example, telling other students not to talk when someone else is speaking; phones ring in the middle of presentation assessment). Needed to pay £60 over budget. Parking near Uni in Bradford... dreadful. Onboarding with Bradford university - awful. Module nearly started and it wasn't completed for me, I had to make lots of phone calls and speak via module leads to get access to the module, lots of chasing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Would you recommend? | Depends on what you want. You get out of the course as much or as little as you put into it. Leadership module was useful to reflect on leadership frameworks and assess your leadership style, and presentation assessment seemed much easier than writing an essay. Managing People module had a lot of very useful human resource management tools for practical use as a manager/clinical leader. Two assessments did not seem as much work compared to other CLFs who had more regular assessments and were graded very well (grading probably inflated by difference in academic level between UK and international students). The course is only limited to two modules, and originally, I couldn't pick the module I wanted (policy and business case writing due to overlap; I was still happy with my choices). Hybrid mode was great, but what made it for me was having other CLFs on the course - I would have enjoyed it way less if they weren't there. I would have done it again, as I felt it wasn't as work heavy as other PG Certs and gave me what I wanted. The module leads are so so lovely, very approachable and supportive. |
| Estimated Cost       | £3650                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

### University of Sheffield - PGCert Medical Education

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | 6 full face-to-face days, each module then had 4 weekly online discussion boards. |
| Course Outline    | 3 modules                                                                         |

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|                      | Each module = 2 face to face teaching sessions, 4 weekly online discussion board topics, 4000-word essay assignment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Assessment Method    | 4000-word essay assignment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Pros                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning about the theory of medical education and how to practically apply this.</li> <li>- Making connections locally with educationalists.</li> <li>- Use of other resources available at the university such as library access and other development opportunities.</li> <li>- Specific graduate writing development sessions that get you used to writing academically.</li> </ul> |
| Cons                 | Finding time to do the reading and the writing for the modules. I now block out times in my diary to dedicate to PGCert reading and writing - I would recommend doing this regardless of what course you decide to do!                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Would you recommend? | Yes, I would recommend this course.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Estimated Cost       | £4,291 for 2026 start                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### Sheffield Hallam - Leadership in health and social care

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|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Online                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Course Outline    | 4 modules spaced out over the year. Modules included: Leadership in Practice, Leading People and Teams, Leadership in Context and Service Improvement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Assessment Method | Each module was marked by a 3000-word essay which was 100% of the grade for the module.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Pros              | <p>Strong theory and around leadership within the NHS and how to apply this in your practice.</p> <p>I enjoyed the Planning Service Improvement module, learnt QI tools and how to practically complete a QI plan.</p> <p>I enjoyed that I had the choice to either attend the module seminars live or watch them back in my own time, during the seminars there was lots of discussions from group members.</p> <p>There was a long list of recommended reading and videos/ links to further supplement learning.</p> <p>The library service was fantastic with support with referencing and academic writing.</p> |

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| Cons                 | <p>There was some repetition with the theory around leadership which was also taught on the FLP Leadership courses.</p> <p>At times it was challenging to fit in with the module seminars and course work around other FLP / Project commitments especially around course work deadlines.</p> <p>The pre/post seminar work and the time needed to complete work for the PG Cert was definitely more than I first expected.</p> <p>I found the overall organisation of the Uni was poor, it was a long and difficult enrolment process and experienced issues being enrolled onto modules, however once started, the course lecturers were easy to communicate with and very helpful.</p> |
| Would you recommend? | <p>I would recommend the course if you preferred all online learning and essay based assessments.</p> <p>I would advise you to plan to spend at least a day per week on PG Cert work and have the ability to flex / increase this around deadline times. It takes a lot of self - organisation</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Estimated Cost       | £3,540.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

### **Birmingham City University - Transforming and Leading in Health Care**

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Online                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Course Outline    | Three modules, two assessments via 3000-word assignments and one assessment via viva                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Assessment Method | two assessments via 3000-word assignments and one assessment via viva                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Pros              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delivered online</li> <li>- Large cohort of healthcare professionals; course tailored specifically to healthcare</li> <li>- Strong emphasis on practical application of leadership and change theory</li> <li>- Course content is engaging and directly applicable to my FLP</li> <li>- Excellent university study support for Dyslexia, including access to a study skills tutor</li> <li>- Helpful guidance with applying for Disabled Students' Allowance, enabling access to specialist software and equipment</li> </ul> |

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|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lecturer support throughout the course, optional weekly evening drop-in sessions with a tutor for additional help etc.</li> <li>- Have some budget left to apply for additional courses/study</li> </ul> |
| Cons                 | Mild issue with providing invoices to NHSE, needed chasing via email                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Would you recommend? | Yes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Estimated Cost       | £2,580                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

### University of Bradford - leadership in health and social care

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid    | Online                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Course Outline       | Hybrid. Mostly online recorded lectures, some live on teams' seminars and 4 full day workshops face to face per module.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Assessment Method    | <p>Two modules- I selected leadership theory and human resource management.</p> <p>The first module is a 30-minute presentation demonstrating your leadership theory knowledge and reflecting on your own leadership approaches. The second module is assessed with 4000-word essay, exploring a HRM issue in your workplace and possible solutions.</p> |
| Pros                 | The lecturers are very attentive and supportive. As someone who hasn't studied since undergraduate, I found it a really nice step up to master's level. The face-to-face sessions are great for embedding the theoretical knowledge.                                                                                                                     |
| Cons                 | At times the online recorded lectures are a little tedious to watch.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Would you recommend? | Yes, I would, I would say if you want that face-to-face contact, a chance to debate and discuss the theory and to be week supported by the team on the course, then choose Bradford                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Estimated Cost       | £3575                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

### Lancaster University - PG Cert Healthcare Leadership

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Online                                                                                                                   |
| Course Outline    |                                                                                                                          |
| Assessment Method | Essay                                                                                                                    |
| Pros              | The online format was convenient; it allowed me to complete the module at times that suited my professional and personal |

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|                      | commitments. The course was also affordable and remained within the approved study budget. The course coordinators were supportive throughout the programme, and the opportunity to have one-to-one sessions with them prior to each assignment submission was particularly helpful.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Cons                 | While the flexibility of accessing the online modules was beneficial, at times the learning experience felt isolating and required a significant level of self-motivation and determination. Additionally, the assessment marking criteria were perceived as quite strict, which could be challenging at times. Incorporating a small number of face-to-face teaching or support sessions would be a valuable addition and could help enhance engagement and learning. |
| Would you recommend? | yes, but interaction with other students was limited, which may have reduced opportunities for collaborative learning and peer engagement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Estimated Cost       | £ 3150                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### University of Aberdeen – Psychology in the workplace – PGCert

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| Online/F2F/Hybrid | Online                                                                                              |
| Course Outline    | 4x 15 credit modules                                                                                |
| Assessments       | Largely MCQ based; some written assignments in the form of incident reports                         |
| Pros              | Excellent teaching, all pre-recorded lectures released on a weekly basis so can access in own time. |
| Cons              | Regular MCQ assignments in some modules - need to assign time for these                             |
| Cost              | £3474 (with NHS staff discount)                                                                     |
| Other comments    | Yes - interesting content, teaching on human factors and leadership across different industries     |