



Programme Specification

Physician Associate Studies [Glenside]

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Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Physician Associate Studies [Glenside]

Highest award: MSc Physician Associate Studies

Interim award: PGCert Health and Social Studies

Interim award: PGDip Health and Social Studies

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Teaching institutions: UWE Bristol

Study abroad: Yes

Year abroad: No

Sandwich year: No

Credit recognition: No

School responsible for the programme: CHSS School of Health and Social Wellbeing, College of Health, Science & Society

Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies: Not applicable

Modes of delivery: Full-time

Entry requirements:

For implementation from: 01 September 2022

Programme code: B96A12

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: This full-time, 2-year Master of Science (MSc) programme delivers a contemporary and research-informed professional training programme with the aim of preparing students for professional practice as a Physician Associate.

In order to qualify to practice and subject to registration students must pass the Physician Associate Registration Assessment (PARA) held by the General Medical Council (GMC).

Features of the programme: This programme is underpinned by cutting-edge medical and healthcare pedagogy to generate professionally skilled graduates of future Physician Associate practice. Programmatically, longitudinal themes of learning have such as professionalism, clinical medicine and clinical skills have been constructed modularly through a student-focused lens to optimise learning and account for hidden learning in a medically-focused curriculum.

A system-based curriculum allow learners to focus on medical specialties and develop confidence in their knowledge and skills before moving onto the next system. Consolidation periods are built into the programme to balance this with the opportunity to cognitively revisit and refine topics in addition to forming deeper understandings across medical and healthcare topics. Blocks of primary and secondary care clinical experience are spaced between academic learning blocks to facilitate learners in applying their developed knowledge, skills and attributes within a clinical setting. This reflects the practice-focused curriculum that has been developed.

Students have access to a range of technology enhanced learning opportunities that include small group; practical work in university; clinical skills and simulation technology; and teaching and learning applications, including artificial intelligence.

An enquiry-based learning philosophy is embedded throughout the curriculum, including case-based learning which is utilised to empower students to develop skills in continually assessing and developing their own learning- alongside academic and clinical facilitator support. This creates a student-centred experience that simultaneously enhances a learner's communication, feedback and teaching skills that are important in contemporary Physician Associate Practice.

Student ownership of continuing personal and professional development is facilitated by the use of a professional practice portfolio. This provides the basis for a personal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) file which facilitates lifelong learning.

Students develop verbal and written reasoning skills within the programme and the assessment strategy is designed to support this – it includes opportunities for demonstration of both forms of communication.

Students will appraise current best practice and evolve their critical thinking and analysis skills throughout their programme. This will enable them to synthesise learning across a range of topics in relation to medical and broader healthcare practice towards the end of their programme.

Educational Aims: The programme aims to:

Develop students with an integrated knowledge and understanding of biomedical and basic sciences, clinical medicine and technical skills with an emphasis upon primary and secondary care practice.

Provide training and experiences that enable students to perform the duties and functions of a Physician Associate in diverse practice settings, incorporating evidence based medicine in clinical decision making.

Provide students with the opportunity to care for diverse patients, families, and populations in outpatient and inpatient settings with a holistic approach, while supervised by a Physician, Physician Associate, or other appropriate healthcare provider.

Instil fundamental principles of professionalism, ethics, and other attributes required to establish and maintain appropriate collaborative relationships with patients, families, colleagues, and the community.

Develop inter-professional working skills including awareness of the role of the

Physician Associate in the patient pathway and the Physician Associate role within the wider healthcare team.

Programme Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Programme Learning Outcomes

- PO1. Graduates will critically consider patient needs and safety, demonstrate awareness of public health and prevention strategies, applying evidence-based interventions and health promotion initiatives to assist in addressing complex population health challenges as agents for social justice in healthcare delivery.
- PO2. Graduates will demonstrate critical reasoning and judgment, applying principles of Good Medical Practice to navigate complex ethical and clinical dilemmas in professional practice as part of a multidisciplinary team.
- PO3. Graduates will critically consider factors in managing complex care and uncertainty, employing sophisticated communication strategies and holistic care approaches to address the multifaceted needs of individuals facing complex health challenges with empathy and compassion
- PO4. Graduates will apply a critical approach to cultural competence, demonstrating cultural humility and sensitivity in the provision of equitable and inclusive care to diverse patient populations that is underpinned by an understanding of psychological and sociological applied principles and theory.
- PO5. Graduates will demonstrate comprehensive understanding of biomedical sciences, synthesising principles of applied anatomy, pathophysiology and clinical sciences to support comprehensive clinical assessments, accurate diagnostic reasoning and evidence synthesis to formulate differential diagnoses and evaluate management plans.
- PO6. Graduates will demonstrate evidence-informed clinical reasoning, integrating critical thinking, and clinical judgment to interpret clinical data and propose appropriate treatment plans under medical supervision.
- PO7. Graduates will evidence competence in medication management, advanced proficiency in establishing detailed medication histories, recommending appropriate treatments, and monitoring therapeutic outcomes in alignment with best practices in conjunction with a multidisciplinary team

- PO8. Graduates will be reflexive evaluators that appreciate lifelong learning, synthesising feedback and self-assessment to develop strategies for ongoing professional growth and development that enhances contribution to patient care, leadership, research and education.
- PO9. Graduates will apply leadership skills in conjunction with interprofessional teamwork, effective communication, and strategic collaboration with an appreciation of healthcare systems, critically evaluating the role of strategy, policy and organisational delivery in contributing to healthcare needs and recognising their own role in contributing to service design and improvement.
- PO1 0. Graduates will demonstrate advanced resource management skills, incorporating principles of cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and stewardship into decision-making processes to ensure efficient and equitable use of healthcare resources in relation to their practice.
- PO1 1. Graduates will demonstrate information literacy skills, employing sophisticated decision-making technologies, maintaining meticulous medical records, and upholding strict confidentiality and data protection standards in the management and utilization of patient information.

Assessment strategy: Encompassing programmatic design, this Physician Associate programme's curriculum has been constructed to allow learners to demonstrate an evolution in knowledge, skills and attributes as they progress through the programme.

Diversity of assessment is featured to allow learners an inclusive opportunity to demonstrate the breadth of outcomes required whilst on programme, including: practical exams, multiple choice question exams, presentations and written assessment tasks. The range of assessments are designed to facilitate students demonstrating academic knowledge and practical skills, and additionally to prepare them for the National Exam.

On a modular level, each has adopted an assessment plan to constructively align with modular content and the intended outcomes. Students are supported to appreciate the inter-modular connections and relevant themes within the curriculum and how these link to each module's assessment. This is done through our developed PFC framework (professionalism, foundations, and contexts).

The graduate attributes expected of a UWE graduate have been incorporated through this curriculum's development in line with the enhancement framework. Learners begin working towards our 'PA PREPPED' graduate outcomes from commencement on programme:

Pragmatic

Accountable

Personable

Resilient

Evidence-informed

Person-centred and inclusive

Prepared to challenge

Enterprising

Diligent

These reflect the Faculty of Physician Associate's/General Medical Council's capabilities in practice (CiPs). These along with our PFC framework enable learners an opportunity to evidence meeting GMC shared learning outcomes (GSLOs) through a combination of student-centred and summative assessment

Professional/clinical examination in the form of OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) are used to assess a number of the GMC's CiPs and GSLOs as a validated assessment method within medical and healthcare education. A single best answer (SBA), multiple choice exam is also used within another module. A modified Angoff methodology is used to standard set these exams as a tool to justify pass marks that reflect expectations of performance against absolute standards and then converted on a grading scale to UWE's standardised grading system (e.g. 50% pass).

Peer teaching and learning opportunities, case study and practice portfolio assessments reflect the portfolio required for professional practice on graduation. Evidence of learning, reflective learning, and changes to approach to clinical and professional practice are further collected and assessed through accounts, case studies and logs within the portfolio throughout the rotational clinical placements.

Student support: This programme has been designed with inclusivity in mind, reflected by diversity of assessment and a student-centred approach. In conjunction, students will develop their reflexivity and resilience skills as professionally required attributes that will build self-support ability where appropriate.

Individual student's needs are taken into account at the time of application (if disclosed) in the form of a pre-entry meeting where specific needs and support requirements are discussed. At the point of entry if specific needs are identified then an access plan meeting is convened between disability service, academics, student and clinical practice to explore student requirements and any additional support needs as appropriate.

Each student will be allocated an Academic Personal Tutor (APT) at the start of the programme. The APT will facilitate students to manage the transition into the first year at UWE and as students' progress from one stage/level to the next.

Students will have the opportunity to meet their APT regularly throughout the programme. Whenever possible, students stay with the same APT for the whole programme. This allows for continuity and the APT monitors the students' academic and personal progress year on year.

Peer assisted learning is an academic support scheme where students trained in facilitation and coaching techniques plan and deliver study support sessions for other students. Some academic sessions may be delivered by PALS as a simulated patient presentation session.

The UWE Physician Associate Society acts as a wider form of student support specific to learners on this programme which facilitates peer support and learning.

Placement specific support is available through programmes leads for practice and wider UWE network, such as the practice placement office. Learners have access to written guidance on how to access such support and also have clinical contacts

during their placement as a support mechanism.

Students are signposted to support in year 1 and year 2 inductions. This includes library and student support staff delivering specific sessions where possible.

Students are reminded of GMC Good Medical Practice guidance around fitness to practice and UWE policies e.g. fitness to study and establish an understand early on around their own responsibilities to recognise when support is required and how to access this, alongside programme and wider UWE support.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1

The student must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UZYYP5-45-M	Foundations in Clinical Medicine 1 2024-25	45
UZYYP7-45-M	Foundations of Physician Associate Practice 1 2024-25	45

Year 2

The student must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 2.

Year 2 Compulsory Modules

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UZYYP8-30-M	Foundations in Clinical Medicine 2 2025-26	30
UZYYP9-45-M	Foundations of Physician Associate Practice 2 2025-26	45
UZYYP10-15-M	Progression to Physician Associate Practitioner 2025-26	15

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

Individuals successfully passing the programme will be able to integrate theory with practice using critical analysis, clinical reasoning and evidence-informed decision making within their scope of practice under appropriately registered clinical supervision. They will undertake multi-professional team working and communicate effectively with service users, carers, and the health and social care team. They will be competent, reflective practitioners with understanding of clinical and key performance indicators with the ability to critique and review research evidence to inform practice.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

This programme redesign has been undertaken by the programme design team in conjunction with an overseen PA refresh working group overseen by the School's quality and executive team.

This redesign have been underpinned by the UWE enhancement framework and included following this due process, including working with practice, patient, student and academic stakeholders.

The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications:

The learning outcomes have been developed with reference to the qualification descriptors used in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

The level of the programme accurately reflects the level of achievement at Masters level that a qualifying student will progress to. In particular, the level 7 learning outcomes as advocated by the QAA document include the development of transferable skills such as exercising initiative and personal responsibility, critically evaluating current research and the undertaking of independent learning in line with continuing professional development.

The programme structure, module content and delivery mechanisms are therefore geared towards:

Imparting a systematic and deep understanding of modern healthcare environments with specific reference to Physician Associate practice

Enabling the students - through clarity of conceptual understanding, establishing a knowledge base, training in critical evaluation and research methodologies – to evaluate current research and advance the current standing of the profession.

Currently there is no QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Physician Associate Studies. The design team have however used the medicine benchmarks to guide the programme design.

In designing the programme there has been particular attention paid to the following areas:

Intellectual Attributes

Generic Graduate Skills and Competencies

Demonstration of competency

Measuring competency

Professional attributes

Teaching, learning and assessment

Programme and module have been mapped to:

Faculty of Physician Associate [FPA] (2023) 'Physician Associate Curriculum' approved by the General Medical Council.

General Medical Council [GMC] (2022) 'Generic and shared outcomes for physician associates and anaesthesia associates'

These have been incorporated in conjunction with the design team considering high-level principles outlined within the GMC's 'Excellence by Design' (2017) and 'Promoting Excellence' (2016) principles and the programme's previous Self Assessment Questionnaire feedback from stakeholder engagement with the GMC.

The above inform the following:

Development of subject specific knowledge and understanding, generic cognitive and intellectual skills, key/transferrable skills, and subject specific practical skills.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies that deliver, ensure and assess the attainment of these levels.

The programme level learning outcomes that are reinforced by the modular learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment strategies described in individual module specifications.

This programme takes a student-centred approach to learning by allowing students to take control of aspects of their learning and providing a learning environment that stimulates active engagement and participation. The programme seeks to create an environment that will stimulate students to take responsibility for aspects of their learning, while the module team facilitates this learning. Module learning outcomes have been designed to ensure that students meet the overall programme learning outcomes on completion of the programme.

A range of assessment methods are incorporated within the programme to cater for a diversity of approaches to learning. The programme team recognises the importance of both summative and formative assessments and feedback as an integral part of the learning teaching process. All assessments comply with university assessment regulations.

University strategies and policies:

This programme will contribute to the UWE Bristol Strategy 2030 with a focus on a student-centred, technology-enhanced and practice-focused curriculum.

Moving forwards, the methods used to evaluate and improve the quality and standards of learning throughout the academic year include student feedback, standard university monitoring methods, reviews and consultation with external stakeholders and external examiners. The student feedback measures include student evaluation forms at the end of modules, verbal feedback within module review sessions, student representative feedback at Student Rep Staff Forum (three students per cohort). There are a standard 4 of these a year. There will be a yearly stakeholders meeting for clinicians, service users and carers, graduates and current students to feed into programme developments, and programme management committee meetings. All of these mechanisms allow for evaluation, reflection, feedback and changes to the programme to enhance quality.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Regulations and Procedures.