



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

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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: HAS School of Health and Social Wellbeing, Faculty of Health & Applied Sciences

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: The Programme is designed to prepare students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to practice safely and effectively as Physician Associates (PA) within the UK.

A Physician Associate (PA) is defined as someone who is:

"a new healthcare professional who, while not a doctor, works to the medical model, with the attitudes, skills and knowledge base to deliver holistic care and treatment within the general medical and/or general practice team under defined levels of supervision. The role is therefore designed to supplement the medical workforce, thereby improving patient access".

Within the educational aims of the programme, the delivery and structure intends to provide an academic and clinical training experience that will prepare the PA student to function as a nationally certified PA in a reliable and competent fashion.

Features of the programme: In the MSc Physician Associate Studies programme, students have access to a range of technology enhanced learning opportunities that include small group practical work in university wide simulation technology. An androgogic problem-based learning model is utilised and student-centred approach to learning is adopted where the students are encouraged and enabled to take responsibility for their own learning.

Other distinct features include:

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 CPD file which facilitates lifelong learning.

Student-centred learning in professional practice settings is facilitated by the use of pre-determined placement competencies.

PALS. Peer assisted learning is effectively utilised throughout the programme to help support students in their learning and development.

Students' learn 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 have the opportunity to engage in inter-professional learning during both the academic and clinical teaching blocks. They will have the opportunities to be taught by and learn with a number of medical and allied health professionals.

Students will review current best practice, critically appraise and provide an output that highlights what they have learned in practice and in an academic setting and how it can reflect an improvement of personal and systemic practice.

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 PA 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, PA, or other competent 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 at large.

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.

Knowledge and Understanding

- A1. Demonstrate an ability to obtain, perform and document a focused or comprehensive history and physical examination on an adult and paediatric patient and correctly identify abnormal findings
- A2. Evaluate signs and symptoms of disease processes and formulate an appropriate differential diagnoses to aid in diagnosis
- A3. Demonstrate the ability to evaluate normal and abnormal lab and other diagnostic data
- A4. Demonstrate an ability to develop an appropriate therapeutic plan taking into consideration patient specifics such as, socioeconomic factors, therapeutic interventions, indications, contraindications, side effects, and scientific evidence
- A5. Evaluate and provide knowledge relating to preventive medicine, health promotion, and basic patient/family counselling
- A6. Demonstrate basic life support and advanced cardiovascular life support skills
- A7. Demonstrate the ability to correctly perform specific minor medical and surgical procedures and utilize aseptic technique

Intellectual Skills

- B1. Learn through reflection and critical evaluation on practice and experience
- B2. Recognise the moral and ethical issues of enquiry and investigation and appreciate the need for professional codes of conduct
- B3. Critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship and apply relevant theories to the analysis of and management of processes and outcomes

Subject/Professional Practice Skills

- C1. Demonstrate an ability to build and sustain effective relationships with patients, families and colleagues, using compassionate behaviour and good listening skills in controlled and routine clinical situations

- C2. Demonstrate an ability to approach patient care in an open-minded and questioning manner
- C3. Demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing with patients, families and other health professionals, maintaining professionalism and providing patient-centred care

Transferable Skills and other attributes

- D1. A commitment to the Physician Associate role: a recognition of its limits, probity in its fulfilment and a valuing of the supervisory relationship of the doctor
- D2. The educational skills and attitudes required by the Physician Associate in their roles as learner and teacher

Assessment strategy: This programme is designed to educate and prepare students both in terms of knowledge and understanding as well as application of that knowledge and the clinical practices that inform it.

Each module has adopted an assessment plan based on the type of knowledge/skill central to that module and the professional practice environment into which graduating students will find themselves employed.

The graduate attributes expected of a Physician Associate include rapid recall and application of scientific, clinical, and personal care knowledge. This encompasses both breadth and appropriate depth of the subject matter, and also requires reflective consolidation of gathered information to best develop treatment strategies and protocols for patients.

Controlled component assessments across the modules include exams for rapid factual recall, for more applicable use of that knowledge (including MCQ, sequential, branched scenario, structure identification, word bank, and other formats) to increase the robustness and inclusivity of questions and students to demonstrate understanding of the clinical and scientific content related to healthy and pathological states (and diagnosis relating to).

Professional/clinical competency in the form of OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) to assess clinical communication and practical skill.

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: 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.

Academic personal tutor

Each student will have an Academic Personal Tutor (APT). 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 be introduced to their APT during the first term where they are informed of their tutor's contact details and how tutorials can be arranged. Subsequent meetings form part of the APT scheme. 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

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.

Part B: Programme Structure**Year 1**

The student must take 120 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules

Final Project Module: Physician Associates in Practice (UZYYGW-30-M) and Interprofessional Communication and Professional Practice (UZYYGX-15-M) continues into Year 2

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UZYY7W-30-M	Foundations in Clinical Medicine 1 2022-23	30
UZYY5Y-30-M	Foundations of Physician Associate Practice 1 2022-23	30
UZWSPX-15-M	Health and Social Care Research: Methods and Methodology 2022-23	15
UZYYGX-15-M	Interprofessional Communication and Professional Practice 2022-23	15
UZYYGW-30-M	Physician Associate Learning in Practice Project 2022-23	30

Year 2

The student must take 60 credits from the modules in Year 2.

Year 2 Compulsory Modules

Final Project Module: Physician Associates in Practice (UZYYGW-30-M) and Interprofessional Communication and Professional Practice (UZYYGX-15-M) continues from Year 1.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UZYY7X-30-M	Foundations in Clinical Medicine 2 2023-24	30
UZYY63-30-M	Foundations of Physician Associate Practice 2 2023-24	30

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

Graduates will demonstrate knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to provide effective care for patients.

Individuals completing and passing the programme will be able to integrate theory with practice using critical analysis, clinical reasoning and autonomous judgment. 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. Physician Associate Studies graduates will adhere to professional codes of conduct and ethics and upon qualification be fit to practice as entry-level Physician Associates.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

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

Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Associate (2012)

The design team have worked through the requirements of this document including the following core areas:

The Competence Framework

The Curriculum Framework

Assessment

Core Syllabus

Evaluation of the Programme

Regulation and Accountability

Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences (HAS) Marking Criteria (2017) :

The HAS marking criteria have been used to establish the level of the programme and its subsequent modules, and to inform the learning outcomes and assessment criteria at Masters level.

These criteria 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 four priority areas outlined within the UWE Bristol strategy 2020. Namely:

Outstanding learning: embedded throughout the programme is the use of TEL to help the students work independently and also the valuable use of clinical placements to develop their practical skills. This vocational programme focuses on applying theory to practice throughout, and has 1, 600 hours of clinical practice across a variety of acute and primary care settings.

Ready and able graduates: a driver in the design of the programme has been to give graduates of the programme key skills to go out and work in a wide range of sectors. Clinical placements through the degree will provide the “considerable contact with patients in relevant healthcare settings” (QAA Radiography Benchmark statements (2001)).

Research with impact: This master’s programme has level programme there is a research theme embedded throughout. During the induction week learners will be introduced to research skills such as reading a paper, literature searching and review, analysing data. Learners will also have the opportunity to complete and showcase a 45 credit substantial piece of research at M Level which will be underpinned by a 15 credit research methods module.

Strategic partnerships, connections and networks: in designing the programme, engagement with potential placement providers has nurtured the links with service providers in the South West.

The University have worked closely with internal and external stakeholders to develop the curriculum. In order to ensure competencies can be achieved, the Competence and Curriculum Framework for Physician Associates, and Health Education England sets out certain criteria to be met by all programmes. This includes the overall length and academic level (90 weeks of a Masters (M level) programme and minimum levels of clinical practice across a variety of acute and

primary care settings. The design of Physician Associate programmes in the UK are also informed by the Department of Health “Matrix specification of Core Clinical Conditions for the Physician Assistant by category of level of competence”. This has also been used to inform both clinical and academic curriculum and assessment.

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 Fora (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.