

Programme Specification

Programme title: Master of Physician Associate Studies

Academic Year:	2019/20
Degree Awarding Body:	University of Bradford
Partner(s), delivery organisation or support provider (if appropriate):	
Final and interim award(s):	[Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) level 7] Master of Physician Associate Studies MSc Medical Sciences Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Sciences Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Sciences
Programme accredited by (if appropriate):	No formal, regulatory external accreditation is required at the time of writing. However, Physician Associates are to become a regulated profession, so it is expected that the course will require regulatory body accreditation, possibly within the next year.
Programme duration:	Master of Physician Associate Studies 2 years (full-time) at 45 weeks per year
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s):	None. Programme mapped to The UK Physician Associate Curriculum and Programme Standards, FPA 2018
Date of Senate Approval:	
Date last confirmed and/or minor modification approved by Faculty Board	March 2019

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

Introduction

This programme is suitable for graduates from life sciences or health courses and is designed to prepare students to enter the professional role of a Physician Associate (PA). The Physician Associate role is an emerging role within the NHS and is defined as someone who is:

“A collaborative healthcare professional with a generalist medical education, who works alongside doctors, providing medical care as an integral part of the multidisciplinary team. Physician Associates are dependent practitioners working under medical supervision, but who are able to work autonomously with appropriate support”.

(The UK Physician Associate Curriculum and Programme Standards, FPA 2018)

Physician Associates are trained to recognise, diagnose and manage common conditions under the supervision of a doctor. Physician Associates can work in a wide range of general and specialised areas of clinical practice within both primary and secondary care settings, and across integrated care pathways.

The programme is intensive; it is delivered over 2 years and leads to the award of a professional master's degree. Students are expected to attend full time for 45 weeks of each year with approximately 50% of this time spent on clinical placement in local hospitals and GP practices. Students graduating with a Master of Physician Associate Studies are eligible to sit the National Examinations, which must be passed in order to practise as a Physician Associate in the UK.

The requirements of a competent Physician Associate are not just based on theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Newly-qualified Physician Associates need to be reflective practitioners with appropriate professional attitudes and attributes, able to critically reflect on their practice at a personal and organisational level and have the confidence and ability to instigate change. The Masters academic component of this course is focused on achieving the competences required of a graduate PA and provides the challenges of enhanced knowledge synthesis, audit and service improvement to produce academic Physician Associates with the ability to lead and develop the profession.

Key Features:

- Fully integrated two-year professional masters course
- Early exposure to clinical practice with a longitudinal GP placement running through the first year
- A range of primary and secondary care placements across the Bradford district with a diverse population
- A focus on patient safety and improving quality of care delivered in collaboration with expert researchers from NIHR Yorkshire and Humber Patient Safety Translational Research Centre
- Opportunity to be actively involved in development, innovation and research of service provision

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to:

Develop graduates who have the medical knowledge, skills and professional attitudes to deliver safe and effective patient-centred care in partnership with the multi-disciplinary team in line with the professional standards required by the Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) within the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). Graduates will have acquired the skills and attitudes for lifelong learning and reflective practice, enabling them to meet the challenge of providing high quality healthcare, responsive to the changing needs of the population and the NHS.

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Sciences at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

- LO 1 Demonstrate in-depth clinical and therapeutic knowledge and an understanding of evidence-based healthcare.
- LO 2 Demonstrate a patient-centred approach, recognising the relevant psychological and social factors that may impact upon a patient's presentation and involve patients and carers in decision making and management plans.
- LO 3 Effectively educate and facilitate the learning of patients, their families and carers to promote and maintain health and wellbeing.
- LO 4 Provide immediate care of medical emergencies, including First Aid and Immediate Life Support (ILS) and demonstrate competence in a range of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Sciences at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

- LO 5 Demonstrate competence in consultation skills, which are tailored to the needs of the patient and the clinical situation and formulate appropriate differential diagnoses and management plans based on clinical information.
- LO 6 Make decisions and professional judgements based on available clinical information and ethical and legal principles.
- LO 7 Recognise potential threats to patient safety, and demonstrate understanding of root cause analysis and risk management processes to facilitate learning at an individual and organisational level.
- LO 8 Work under supervision to prescribe or propose appropriate therapeutic interventions from the full range of available treatments for differentiated clinical conditions.
- LO 9 Critically analyse research evidence in medicine and healthcare, propose own ideas and justify appropriate courses of action.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Degree of Master of Medical Sciences at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

- LO 10 Critically reflect on own practice to identify learning and development needs and utilise learning opportunities, research evidence, guidelines and audit to improve professional practice
- LO 11 Make recommendations for improving a service process in an area relevant to their practice through critical review of literature, identification of an area of practice requiring improvement and the collection and the critical analysis of empirical research data

To be eligible to sit the National Examinations to qualify as a Physician Associate, the FPA requires a combination of both academic achievement and a statement from the HEI of the candidate's fitness to practise, in terms of professional behaviour and clinical competence. Therefore, to be eligible for the award of Degree of Master of Physician Associate Studies at FHEQ level 7, students will additionally be able to:

- LO 12 Communicate effectively with both patients and colleagues and function effectively as a member of the multi-disciplinary team.
- LO 13 Behave as an ambassador for the Physician Associate profession and demonstrate professional behaviour consistent with the core values of the NHS.
- LO 14 Work safely and effectively within the professional scope of practice of a Physician Associate, seeking help and advice from the supervising physician when necessary and within published policies, procedures and guidelines.

Curriculum

Postgraduate Certificate in Medical Sciences

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate if they have successfully completed the following modules (60 credits) at the end of Year 1.

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/ Option/ Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
7	Integrated Medical Sciences 1	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7060-C
7	Communication and Clinical Skills for Physician Associates	Core	30	1 & 2	NUR7058-C

THIS AWARD DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO ENTER THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS MANAGED BY THE FACULTY OF PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES OR WORK AS A PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE

Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Sciences

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed the following modules (120 credits) at the end of Year 2.

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/Option/Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
Year 1					
7	Integrated Medical Sciences 1	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7060-C
7	Communication and Clinical Skills for Physician Associates	Core	30	1 & 2	NUR7058-C
7	Research, Innovation and Professional Practice	Core	30	Full Year	PHA7062-C
Year 2					
7	Integrated Medical Sciences 2	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7061-C

THIS AWARD DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO ACCESS THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS MANAGED BY THE FACULTY OF PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES OR WORK AS A PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE

Degree of Master of Science in Medical Sciences

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Master of Science if they have successfully completed 180 credits at the end of year 2.

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/Option/Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
Year 1					
7	Integrated Medical Sciences 1	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7060-C
7	Communication and Clinical Skills for Physician Associates	Core	30	1 & 2	NUR7058-C
7	Research, Innovation and Professional Practice	Core	30	Full Year	PHA7062-C
Year 2					
7	Integrated Medical Sciences 2	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7061-C
7	Quality and Service Improvement project	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7043-C
7	Applied Clinical Knowledge & Professional Practice	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7063-C

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Degree of Master of Physician Associate Studies

Students will be eligible for the award of Degree of Master of Physician Associate Studies if they have successfully completed all modules and achieved the award learning outcomes. Students achieving this award will be eligible to sit the Faculty of Physician Associates National Examinations to qualify and work as a Physician Associate.

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/Option/Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
Year 1					
7	Integrated Medical Sciences 1	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7060-C
7	Communication and Clinical Skills for Physician Associates	Core	30	1 & 2	NUR7058-C
7	Research, Innovation and Professional Practice	Core	30	Full Year	PHA7062-C
7	Professional Competence 1	Core	0	Full Year	PHA7064-Z
Year 2					
7	Integrated Medical Sciences 2	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7061-C
7	Quality and Service Improvement project	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7043-C
7	Applied Clinical Knowledge & Professional Practice	Core	30	1 & 2	PHA7063-C
7	Professional Competence 2	Core	0	Full Year	PHA7065-Z

Learning and Teaching Strategy

Students will develop the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to meet the learning outcomes of the programme through a blended approach. The teaching and learning strategy has been designed to meet all the requirements of the University of Bradford Curriculum Framework. Students will learn through keynote lectures, practical and simulation classes, seminars and group tutorials, online study packages, collaborative learning using enquiry-based learning, team-based learning (TBL), problem-based learning (PBL), placement learning and reflection on learning experiences collected via an e-portfolio.

Practical history taking, practical clinical examination skills and practical simulation classes will be used to help develop consultation skills, procedural clinical skills and diagnosis and management of a range of conditions in a safe environment in preparation for clinical placement. Students will develop skills in Immediate Life Support (ILS) through compulsory attendance at a certificated practical course validated by the Resuscitation Council. Seminars and group tutorials will be used to reinforce and discuss the application of knowledge and reflect upon and share experiences.

Approximately half of the learning time will be dedicated to placement learning where students will have the opportunity to practise and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours in a clinical context setting and receiving regular formative feedback from clinical supervisors. Students will be required to evidence their learning and progress through the ongoing development of a programme level e-portfolio.

Professional skills, including critical reflection, communication skills, team-working skills including multidisciplinary working, decision-making, facilitating the learning of others, professionalism and working within own competence, will be developed via taught sessions, clinical placements and support with ongoing development of the e-portfolio.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy has been fully aligned with the programme learning outcomes to support learning and allow students to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills expected of a newly qualified Physician Associate. There are several different modes of assessment within the programme including Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), Single Best Answer examinations (SBAs), written assignments and clinically-based assessment. The timetabling of modules has been driven from a learner perspective, carefully planning sessions across modules which align with relevant material taught in other modules. This includes the design and the timing of assessments.

Students have the opportunity to receive formative feedback in order to support their learning before all summative assessments. This is presented in different ways depending on the assessment method. Clinical placement also provides many opportunities for informal feedback from staff and peers when participating in clinical care prior to summative end of placement assessments.

Students are required to submit a summative portfolio at the end of the programme as part of the 'Professional Competence' modules. This portfolio is built over the two years of the course and is a synoptic assessment, bringing together elements from across the whole programme to evidence learning, progression and competence to practice as a newly qualified Physician Associate.

Formative Assessment includes:

- Feedback on selected reflections of learning experiences
- Feedback on draft written assignments
- Mock Observed Structured Clinical Examinations
- Mock Single Best Answer papers with feedback
- Team-based Learning ongoing Individual Readiness Assurance Tests (iRATs) and Team Readiness Assurance Tests (tRATs)
- Team-based Learning activities including application exercises and immediate feedback on Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs)

Whilst on practice, placement students will receive regular feedback on the development of knowledge and skills through completion of tasks required for their e-portfolio, including:

- Mini-clinical evaluation exercise (mini-CEX)
- Direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS)

- Case based discussion (CBD)
- Running small teaching sessions

Summative Assessment includes:

- e-portfolio
- OSCEs
- Multiple Mini SBAs
- Final SBA Papers
- Critical Reflection
- Written Assignments applying knowledge and skills gained in practice
- Service Improvement Project

Assessment Regulations

This programme conforms to the standard University Assessment Regulations which are available at the link below

<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/aqpo/ordinances-and-regulations/>

However, there are two exceptions to these regulations as listed below:

- For reasons of Patient Safety, and to more closely reflect the standard required for the Faculty of Physician Associate National Examinations, pass marks will be set higher than the University standard of 40% for OSCEs, end of year SBA examinations, Drug Calculations SBA and Safe Medicines Use SBA. There will be no compensation between assessment components. Details can be found in the module descriptors
- Where English is not the first language of an applicant we will require an overall score of 7.5 in IELTS with no element score less than 7.0 (or the appropriate level in equivalent acceptable English Language qualifications).

Admission Requirements

The University welcomes applications from all potential students and most important in the decision to offer a place is our assessment of a candidate's potential to benefit from their studies and of their ability to succeed on this particular programme. Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

The standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

Essential

- 2:2 (or above) in a Life Science, Biomedical Science, or Healthcare subject from a UK University or overseas equivalent.
- Entrants need a strong science background and therefore some Life Science or Healthcare subjects are not considered appropriate for entry to this course due to their limited biology content. Please email the admissions team with details of your degree course if you are unsure.

- Where English is not the first language of an applicant we will require an overall score of 7.5 in IELTS with no element score less than 7.0 (or the appropriate level in equivalent acceptable English Language qualifications).

Desirable

- Recent experience of volunteering or employment in a healthcare environment.

Personal statement

We are looking for students to demonstrate that they have the skills required to successfully complete this demanding full-time course, balancing academic study with clinical placements, a willingness to travel and flexible working patterns.

Your personal statement is an important part of our selection process. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment to becoming a Physician Associate and describe how your work experience has helped to prepare you for the role.

(Maximum 500 words)

Health screening

Successful applicants will be required to comply with any health screening as requested by the Department of Health in line with current guidelines for healthcare workers

Police screening

This course will include work with children and vulnerable adults so you are required to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check. More information about this process will be sent to you as part of the admissions process.

Professional registration

If you are a current healthcare professional or a member of a registered professional body, we ask that you provide details of your registration. If you have had your professional registration suspended or revoked, or undergone a disciplinary/fitness to practise investigation, you will be required to provide further information if selected for an interview. You may also be asked to provide full copies of related documentation.

Previous enrolment on a clinical course

If you have previously enrolled on a Physician Associate Studies or other clinical course which you did not complete, you must declare this on your application and provide information about these circumstances.

Recognition of Prior Learning

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and

recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme. For further detail go to:

<https://unibradfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/academic-quality-and-enhancement-intranet/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2Facademic-quality-and-enhancement-intranet%2FShared%20Documents%2FGuide-To-The-Recognition-Of-Prior-Learning%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2Facademic-quality-and-enhancement-intranet%2FShared%20Documents>

Minor Modification Schedule

Version Number	Brief description of Modification	Date of Approval (Faculty Board)
1		