

Programme Specification (PG)

Awarding body / institution:	Queen Mary University of London
Teaching institution:	Queen Mary University of London
Name of final award and programme title:	MSc Physician Associate Studies
Name of interim award(s):	PG Certificate in Healthcare Studies PG Diploma in Healthcare Studies PG Diploma in Physician Associate Studies
Duration of study / period of registration:	24 months
Queen Mary programme code(s):	B961
QAA Benchmark Group:	NA
FHEQ Level of Award:	Level 7
Programme accredited by:	
Date Programme Specification approved:	
Responsible School / Institute:	Institute of Health Sciences Education

Schools / Institutes which will also be involved in teaching part of the programme:

Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry

Collaborative institution(s) / organisation(s) involved in delivering the programme:

Barts Health NHS Trust, Barking Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust, Moorfields NHS Trust, Homerton University Hospital, University College London NHS Trust, Royal Marsden NHS Trust, Lewisham & Greenwich NHS Trust, General practices within NC and NE London.

Programme outline

The MSc in PA studies is delivered over 24 months (45 weeks per year) on a full-time basis. Roughly half of the course will be taught within the university and the remainder in work-place settings in hospitals and the community.

The initial curriculum was based on the Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Associate 2012 and from 2024 will be based on the GMC curriculum. It is structured into 3 elements: knowledge, skills and themes. Each of the 8 modules that constitute the course contains these key elements to varying degrees. Each of the elements link to specific learning outcomes related to the module of study.

Aims of the programme

The programme aims to equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and attitudes, in line with the professional standards set by

the GMC's Outcome for Graduates (2018) in order to be licensed to practice as a professionally qualified physician associate in the NHS. Graduates will be able to work autonomously under the supervision of doctors to undertake many roles traditionally performed by doctors and as such will augment the existing medical work force. Graduates will also have acquired the skills and attitudes for life-long learning and reflective practice, enabling them to meet the challenge of providing high quality health care, responsive to the changing needs of the population and the NHS. These aims are met through an innovative, student-centred course of study, which is responsive to the needs of employers and the strategic aims of the NHS. Learning occurs in a variety of educational settings but is distinguished by the early exposure to clinical environments.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Intended learning outcomes – the programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills and appropriate attitudes, that supports PA competencies;

Academic Content:

A 1	The physical, biomedical and social science concepts, principles, processes and mechanisms underpinning a systems based approach to the body in health and disease.
A 2	A curriculum with social accountability at its core where Health and illness is studied in the context of the whole individual and his/her place in the family and community.
A 3	Patients' and carers' experience of ill-health and medical care in a multi-cultural society.
A 4	Disease prevention and health promotion in relation to public health medicine.
A 5	A diverse and equitable curriculum that examines and explores the impact of race, gender, disabilities and other minoritized groups on health and illness including inequities in healthcare and patient outcomes.

Disciplinary Skills - able to:

B 1	Recognise normal and abnormal function of body systems.
B 2	Use effectively the various strands of knowledge and understanding in the context of treating patients.
B 3	Proficiency in a stipulated range of clinical and communication skills in Medicine (consistent with the GMC's recommendations).
B 4	Proficiency in a stipulated range of clinical and communication skills in Medicine (consistent with the GMC's recommendations).
B 5	Ability to work autonomously with appropriate supervision and as part of a team, including with other healthcare professionals
B 6	Appropriate modes of interaction with patients and others involved in healthcare.
B 7	Communicate effectively with a wide variety of individuals and groups, utilising a variety of means.

B 8	Record and evaluate his/her own academic, professional and clinical performance.
B 9	Apply problem-solving and numerical skills in a range of theoretical and practical settings.
B 10	Manage change and uncertainty effectively, and respond to changing demands.
B 11	Take responsibility for continuing personal and professional learning and development (CPD).
B 12	Develop basic skills in teaching, and knowledge of effective educational practice.
B 13	Demonstrate the ability to communicate research findings and data through oral and written formats.

Attributes:	
C 1	Caring, compassionate and ethical approach towards the practice of Medicine.
C 2	Independent attitude towards planning and directing one's own learning, with capacity for self-assessment.
C 3	Manage time, prioritise workloads, and recognise and manage personal emotions and stress.
C 4	Apply appropriate information management skills (e.g. IT skills).
C 5	Equitable and respectful approach to patients and staff.

How will you learn?

As an adult learner you should understand what learning methods work best for you. The course will be taught using a variety of learning methodologies including:

Mixed mode education(MME) where knowledge and skills will be taught through different media including online platforms, hybrid technologies and in-person seminars and workshops; team based learning using a problem based approach; TBL, practicals; formative assessment workshops; clinical demonstrations; multi-media presentations (Learning Centre); community placements; ward rounds; clinical skills simulator; multi-professional training ward; structured interactions with (simulated) patients. In addition, Student-Selected Components (SSC); study skills; personal portfolio.

Some of the material will be delivered by a flipped class room model where contact time can be spent explaining concepts and exploring issues raised in a collaborative fashion as a group.

In addition, the course introduces inter-professional learning both on the campus and in clinical placements to foster and cultivate collaborative professional relationships and peer-learning.

How will you be assessed?

Assessment tools will be used to assess your progress in achieving the designated learning outcomes. These methods include but are not limited to; Applied Knowledge Test (AKTs) and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), group work, presentations and essays.

How is the programme structured?

Please specify the structure of the programme diets for all variants of the programme (e.g. full-time, part-time - if applicable). The description should be sufficiently detailed to fully define the structure of the diet.

The course begins in January (start of semester 2). The programme is composed of 6 core modules (150 credits) and one compulsory 30 credit research module. The course is constructed as a spiral curriculum so that students are constantly referred back to topics and themes they would have encountered and studied in previous modules/placements. This approach to clinical studies allows students to build layers of complexity to their learning through reviewing and refreshing existing knowledge and skills whilst engaging with new learning over the 2 year course. Modules are largely studied in a sequential manner with a single pathway of study.

The course begins with an induction week which has the intention of providing a broad overview of the course, orientation to the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (FMD) and to services for students available within the FMD and Queen Mary University of London. As well as revision of study skills and tips to get the most out of the course. This is integrated with the Health Improvement research module where students are taught research methodology and evidenced based practice, to equip them to think critically and design a research project that explores quality improvement and EBP in clinical medicine.

The first module, Applied Medical Science is studied in full- time and lasts 8 to 10 weeks. The module will be completed in its entirety within the third semester and provides a foundation of medical and social sciences from which students can then proceed to learn about health and illness.

The next module is a 10 week course entitled, Clinical Medicine: Physical and Mental Health comprising classroom activity which includes seminars and practical workshops where skills in clinical medicine, such as history taking, clinical examination and procedural techniques, are taught and practiced. The module also contains didactic teaching in mental health issues including studying the effects of drug misuse on the individual, family units and wider society.

The Community Medicine module follows and is a clinical teaching motif throughout the two year course: it runs in tandem with the other modules throughout the programme with students typically spending a 4 week block in the first year and one day a week in the second year, in a community setting. The purpose is to provide a longitudinal experience of providing care in the community through primary care services. In the first year, there is a 5 week taught component where students also learn about topics/ specialties which present frequently to primary care e.g. ENT, dermatology, musculoskeletal medicine including rheumatology).

At the end of this teaching block, students embark on a rotation of placements which typically comprise; 4 weeks in a general medicine placement, 4 weeks in a psychiatry placement and 4 weeks in general practice. Following the end of year exams which proceed after the blocks of placement, there is a 3 week SSC (special study component) which permits students to return to one of their year 1 specialties to gain further experience and expertise.

All first year modules must be passed to progress to the next year of study.

Year 2 begins with a 4 week block of teaching that starts with Care of Women and Children, which encompasses obstetrics, gynaecology, sexual health and paediatrics. This is followed by Clinical Medicine and Surgery, which includes a 2 week taught component on care of the older adult, including end of life care and a 3 week taught course on Surgery and Emergency Medicine. Students are taught using MME which includes seminars, practicals, group work. The Clinical Medicine and Surgery module will focus on routine and emergency medical and surgical problems affecting adults. Once the theoretical teaching and learning of relevant practical skills is completed, students embark on a 7 month rotation of clinical placements through all the specialties; paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, emergency medicine, surgery and general medicine.

A 3 week SSC after the end of course exam, allows student to spend time in a specialty of their choice, which can be an opportunity to shadow in a clinical department that they aspire to work in or have already secured a position in.

Throughout the 2 years, students have upto 15 weeks of private study for consolidation, examination preparation or course work.

Programme Title: MSc Physician Associate Studies

Students who successfully pass Year 2 Finals and are in good standing with no ongoing fitness to practice or other professionalism issues, are entered into the national licensing PA exam.

Academic Year of Study FT - Year 1

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Selection Status	Academic Year of Study	Semester
Applied Medical Sciences	IHS7120	30	7	Core	1	Semester 2
Clinical Medicine: Physical and Mental Health	IHS7111	30	7	Core	1	Semesters 2 & 3
Community Medicine I	IHS7112	15	7	Core	1	Semester 3
Healthcare Improvement (Start)	IHS7119	0	7	Compulsory	1	Calendar year

Academic Year of Study FT - Year 2

Module Title	Module Code	Credits	Level	Module Selection Status	Academic Year of Study	Semester
Care of Women and Children	IHS7114	30	7	Core	2	Semester 2
Clinical Medicine and Surgery	IHS7113	30	7	Core	2	Semester 2
Community Medicine II	IHS7115	15	7	Core	2	Calendar year
Healthcare Improvement (Finish)	IHS7119	30	7	Compulsory	2	Semesters 2-3

What are the entry requirements?

All applicants for MSc Physician Associate program will be graduates.

UK graduates

• All candidates must have a BSc (honors) in Life Sciences, Biomedical or Health Profession Degree. This will usually be a bachelor's degree or may be a four-year Masters, but the latter only if it is a first degree. The minimum academic entry requirements are:

- A first-class honours (2:1 minimum)
- Successful passage through CASPER situation judgment test with possible further testing prior to the interview.
- If an applicant is offered place, he/she must have completed this degree prior to enrolment. Candidates are required to complete their degree within the prescribed period allowed by their University.

• Candidates whose native language is not English will need to provide evidence of their English language ability.

- o First degree taught in the English Language medium

Non-UK graduates

- We accept British Bachelor (Honors) equivalent qualifications gained in other countries. Non-UK graduates are required to send a full transcript of their degree together with a statement of comparability from UK NARIC confirming their degree is comparable to a British BSc (Honors) degree standard prior to making an application, which will be considered on a case by case basis. Only an applicant's first degree is considered.
- Applications from candidates who are in their last year of the degree are accepted provided they are predicted to achieve a minimum of second-class lower honours (2:2) degree or above. If these applicants are offered a place, they must have completed this degree prior to enrolment. Applicants are not accepted from degree students in the first or second year of their degree.
- Candidates whose native language is not English, you will need to provide evidence of your English language ability. Candidates must meet one of the following English Language qualifications from applicants educated outside the UK who meet our other academic criteria:-

- o IELTS with a score of 7.0 overall (must have been taken within 2 years)
- o GCSE/IGCSE/O-level in English Language at grade B All IGCSE must have a speaking and listening component in the exam
- o First degree taught in the English Language medium

The offer of a place on the course will be conditional upon clearance by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Occupational Health checks.

Candidates must meet one of the following English Language qualifications from applicants educated within the UK but not in the English language medium who meet our other academic criteria:-

- o IELTS with a score of 7.0 overall (must have been taken within 2 years)

How will the quality of the programme be managed and enhanced? How do we listen to and act on your feedback?

You will have a variety of ways to provide feedback. We will regularly ask for your feed back at the end of modules and taught components in order to refine and improve the effectiveness and experience of the components/ modules. You will be asked to feedback regarding your experiences in clinical placements, this is your opportunity to contribute to the development of the course.

You can utilise informal channels either via your course tutor or directly to the course director or their deputies.

The PA Staff-Student Liaison Committee provides a formal means of communication and discussion between the Institute and its students. The committee consists of student representatives from each year on the programme together with appropriate representation from staff within the Institute. It is designed to respond to the needs of students, as well as act as a forum for discussing programme and module developments. Staff-Student Liaison Committees meet regularly throughout the year.

All Schools and institutes are required to operate an Annual Programme Review of their taught undergraduate and postgraduate provision. The process is organised at a School/institute-level with the Head of School/institute, or equivalent, responsible for the completion of the final Annual Programme Report. Students' views are considered in this process through analysis of the PTES, module evaluations and participation.

What academic support is available?

The course begins with an induction week to provide orientation to Queen Mary. You will be advised of the services available. As well as generic skills workshops to help you cope with this academically demanding course.

You will be allocated a course personal tutor who will meet with you regularly to discuss your progress and how you are coping with the course. During these meetings you will receive feedback on your performance devised from the regular in course assessment. If you are struggling with a particular area of the course, your tutor will arrange for you to be seen by the Senior Year Tutor.

Programme-specific rules and facts

Progression:

Students must take and pass 75 credits of core modules to progress from year one to year two of the programme.

Exit Awards:

Any student failing a core module may be issued an exit award, where requirements are met. The award title will be "Healthcare Studies" and will not confer eligibility to sit the national licensing exam.

Exit Awards at year 1:

Students who achieve 60 credits will be awarded a Pg Certificate in Healthcare Studies

Exit Awards at year 2:

Students who achieve 120 credits but fail any core module will be awarded a Pg Diploma in Healthcare Studies. This qualification does not confer eligibility to sit the national licensing exam.

A student must achieve the minimum specified hours on clinical placement as per the programme handbook before being permitted to sit end of year exams. Prior to the award of the degree, a student must not have any outstanding procedures under the Fitness to Practise and Professional Capability Regulations. A student whose professional behaviour or compliance with the programme requirements is deemed to be unsatisfactory may be required to attend a specific remedial programme or be recommended to undertake counselling or health care. A student whose attendance, professional attitude and conduct and/or quality of work is formally assessed as unsatisfactory may have their registration and enrollment terminated.

National Exam.

To qualify and practise as a Physician Associate, students must undertake the national exam (not part of the Queen Mary award). Only those students who pass the end of year 2 exams and obtain a minimum PG Diploma in Physician Associate Studies will be recommended for the national exam.

How inclusive is the programme for all students, including those with disabilities?

All students will have access to the Student Support Office for advice and guidance. Where appropriate, students will be supported by the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Due to the vocational nature of the course, a student's ability to achieve the learning outcomes for the course and therefore be in a position to perform the work of a PA will need to be considered with reference to the graduate outcomes outlined by the GMC as part of their regulation of the PA profession. The programme has addressed inequities in assessment in particular to ensure that the course is inclusive and supportive of all students, irrespective of their learning differences or disability.

Links with employers, placement opportunities and transferable skills

This programme has been devised in collaboration with a wide range of NHS employers. It is well supported by the local NHS trusts in North Central East London and Clinical commissioning groups, as well as a number of Trusts outside of the traditional placement providers for QMUL medical school, including; Lewisham and Greenwich Trust, UCLH NHS Trust, Royal Marsden NHS Trust and CCGs in South London . You will spend time in these workplaces as part of your course. This exposure will help you to decide your future field of medical practice. You will find that on completion of the course, your skills will be highly sort after. Employment opportunities are likely to be excellent. However, in order to practise, it is essential that you pass both the programme as well as the National Certifying Exam.

Programme Specification Approval

Person completing Programme Specification:

Miss. (Dr) Arunthathi Mahendran

Programme Title: MSc Physician Associate Studies

Person responsible for management of programme:

Dr Brenda Manoharan

Date Programme Specification produced / amended by School / Institute Learning and Teaching Committee:

11.12.23 (For Jan 2025)

Date Programme Specification approved by Taught Programmes Board:

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