## Programme Specification

**Programme title: MSc Physician Associate Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year:</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree Awarding Body:</td>
<td>University of Bradford</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Final and interim award(s): | [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) level 7]  
MSc Physician Associate Studies  
Postgraduate Diploma Physician Associate Studies  
Postgraduate Certificate Health Associate Studies |
| Programme accredited by (if appropriate): | No formal, regulatory external accreditation is required at the time of writing.  
Programmes are however expected to demonstrate alignment with the Competence and Curriculum Framework for Physician Assistants 2012 as hosted by the Physician Assistant Managed Voluntary Register.  
It is expected that the Royal College of Physicians will soon be responsible for providing professional body approval for this programme, possibly within the next year.  
When the profession itself becomes a regulated profession, then it is expected that the course will also require regulatory body accreditation. |
| Programme duration:         | PGDip Physician Associate Studies  
2 years (full time) – at 46 weeks a year  
MSc Physician Associate Studies  
Additional 12 months (part time) |
| Date of Senate Approval:    |                             |
| Date last confirmed and/or minor modification approved by Faculty Board |                             |
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.

This is a very exciting time to be studying for this qualification. The physician associate role is an emerging role within the NHS and 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 (Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Assistant, 2012).

Physician associates are trained to recognise, diagnose and manage common conditions under the supervision of a doctor. They are dependant practitioners and work within their sphere of competence. Physician associates can work in a host of general and specialised areas of clinical practice within both primary and secondary care settings, and across integrated care pathways.

This new programme at Bradford is hosted by the Faculty of Life Sciences, in the School of Medical Sciences. However, this is a cross-faculty initiative, with the course designed and delivered by staff from the Faculty of Life Sciences, with expertise in the medical sciences and the application to medicine, alongside staff from the Faculty of Health Studies, with expertise in communication, clinical skills training and placement learning and students will benefit from the facilities, resources and support each faculty can offer.

The programme is intensive. To achieve the qualification required to enter this profession, which is at Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) level. The programme is delivered over 2 years and students are expected to attend full time for 46 weeks of each year with approximately 50% of this time spent on clinical placement in local hospitals and GP practices. Students with a PGDip Physician Associate Studies are eligible to sit the national examination to qualify as a physician associate, this programme prepares students to pass that examination.

In Year 1, students develop competence in ‘communication and clinical skills’, both in the classroom and through early practice placements. Alongside these practical skills, students learn how to ‘apply the knowledge of the medical sciences to patient-facing clinical practice’ through the completion of a large module which spans both years of the course. We have worked with placement providers to plan timely, authentic, experiential learning opportunities in the workplace to enhance the learning in the University. In Year 2, students add a greater depth to their increasing clinical knowledge by studying a module linked to safe, effective use of medicines and other therapeutic interventions. Currently physician associates cannot legally prescribe medicines but this may change in the future and this module will help prepare students for a potential future prescribing role.
Students can then achieve a higher award of a Masters in Science (MSc) Physician Associate Studies, typically over an additional 12 month period, where they would undertake a clinical, research-focused dissertation based on their practice as a qualified Physician Associate.

This is a fully integrated course, by this we mean that our teaching of the biomedical, clinical and pharmacological sciences is always framed around the application to the clinical practice of working as a physician associate. Students will be taught by a range of healthcare professionals both in the classroom and on clinical practice, including doctors, nurses, and pharmacists, and of course on clinical placements there are even further opportunities to work in an interprofessional environment. There are also numerous opportunities to work with patients, service users and carers who are involved in classroom teaching sessions.

The programme includes a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods. It is learner-centred and uses enquiry-based learning, team based learning and problem based learning. Throughout the course we focus on outcomes (what students will be doing in future roles), using case-based and patient centred learning tasks and incorporating clinical placements from the beginning. We are focused on local healthcare needs, and have integrated public health and digital health technologies themes running throughout the course.

**Programme Aims**

The programme is intended to:

Equip newly qualified Physician Associates with the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by the modern NHS, to deliver safe and effective patient-centred care in partnership with the multi-disciplinary team.

Students will have the:

- Ability to solve complex problems and justify their decisions.
- Confidence and ability to communicate effectively with patients and healthcare professionals.
- Ability to reflect on their practice to inform their professional development.
Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

PLO 1  Take a patient history, and where necessary carry out a physical examination, in order to formulate and document a detailed differential diagnosis for a range of clinical presentations

PLO 2  Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures for a range of clinical conditions and request and interpret the results from other diagnostic procedures

PLO 3  Formulate an appropriate management plan in consultation with the patient and, if necessary, the supervising physician

PLO 4  Recognise a range of conditions that you lack the resources to confirm the diagnosis or manage safely but can take measures to avoid immediate deterioration and refer appropriately, including a recognition of the limits of own competence.

PLO 5  Recognise the relevant psychological and social factors that may impact upon a patient's presentation

PLO 6  Recognise potential clinical risk situations and take appropriate action to minimise the danger to yourself and others

PLO 7  Manage a range of prior diagnosed conditions safely, effectively and without routine referral

PLO 8  Manage a range of prior diagnosed conditions once the strategic management decisions have been made by others

PLO 9  Work under delegation clauses to prescribe or propose appropriate therapeutic interventions from the full range of available treatments for differentiated clinical conditions

PLO 10  Work safely and effectively within the limits of your competence seeking help and advice from your supervising physician when necessary and within published policies, procedures and guidelines

PLO 11  Demonstrate how to promote and maintain health and wellbeing effectively in order to prevent illness in your patients
PLO 12 Educate and facilitate the learning of patients, peers and other members of the healthcare team

PLO 13 Provide immediate care of medical emergencies, including First Aid and Intermediate Life Support (ILS)

PLO 14 Make decisions and professional judgements based on clinical information and ethical and legal principles

PLO 15 Consult and communicate effectively and empathetically with patients and other practitioners within a healthcare context

PLO 16 Use information and information technology effectively in a healthcare context

PLO 17 Work effectively in cross-cultural situations

PLO 18 Work effectively in an integrated health care system

PLO 19 Critically reflect on your practice and the standards of competence in order to identify professional development needs and take appropriate action to meet the required standard.

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

PLO 20 Develop and critically utilise advanced knowledge and skills to undertake a clinical project relevant to a health/social care setting
Curriculum

The programme is designed around three core modules:

1. Communication & Clinical Skills for Physician Associates (30 credits)
   This module begins early in Semester 1 of the first year and helps prepare students for early clinical exposure.

2. Patients and their Medicines (30 credits)
   This module runs towards the end of the programme in Semester 2 of the second year as students need to have gained sufficient clinical knowledge and experience to gain the most from the module.

3. Integrated Medical Sciences & Professional Practice (60 credits)
   This module begins at the very start of Semester 1 in Year 1 but runs throughout the programme ending in Semester 2 of Year 2.

Postgraduate Certificate in Health Associate Studies

The required level of postgraduate award to be eligible to sit a national examination to qualify as a Physician Associate is a Postgraduate Diploma. However, students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate if students have successfully completed 60 credits at the end of Year 2. Due to the integrated nature of the course and timings of module assessments students exiting the course before the end of Year 2 are not eligible for any award.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FHEQ Level</th>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Type (Core/ Option/ Elective)</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester(s)</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Max of 60 credits taken from the following at the end of Year 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communication &amp; Clinical Skills for Physician Associates</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Year 1 Semester 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>NUR7058-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Patients and their medicines</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Year 2 Semester 2</td>
<td>PHA7055-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Integrated Medical Sciences &amp; Professional Practice</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Years 1 &amp; 2 Semester 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>PHA7054-E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THIS AWARD DOES NOT CONFER ELIGIBILITY TO ACCESS THE NATIONAL EXAMINATION MANAGED BY THE UK AND IRELAND UNIVERSITIES BOARD FOR PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE EDUCATION (UKIUBPAE) AS A BASIS OF JOINING THE MANAGED VOLUNTARY REGISTER AS A QUALIFIED PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE.
Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FHEQ Level</th>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Type (Core/option/elective)</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester (s)</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All 120 credits must be completed by the end of Year 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communication and Clinical Skills for Physician Associates</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Year 1 Semester 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>NUR7058-C</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Patients and their medicines</td>
<td>Core</td>
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<td>Year 2 Semester 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Integrated Medical Sciences &amp; Professional Practice</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Years 1 &amp; 2 Semester 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>PHA7054-E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Degree of Master

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FHEQ Level</th>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>Type (Core/option/elective)</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester (s)</th>
<th>Module Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pursuing a Clinical Dissertation</td>
<td>Core</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>RES7010-E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will be eligible for the award of Degree of Master if they have successfully completed at least 180 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

1. Curriculum Design

The guiding principles used to design the programme and that have informed the learning and teaching strategy are as follows

The curriculum should:
- Be evidence-based and developed using sound educational theory
- Be case-based and patient-centred
- Include work based learning through clinical placements
- Integrate science with practice and practical experience
2. 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.

Keynote lectures will be delivered by practitioners and researchers expert in their field either in person or online synchronously or asynchronously via podcasts.

Practical history taking, practical clinical examination skills and practical simulation classes will be used to help develop students’ skills in examination, diagnosis and management of a range of conditions where students can develop and practice these skills in a safe but realistic environment. Students will also be introduced to and engage with Bradton®. This is a virtual learning community with real patient stories and experiences played by simulated actors as the patients. The Bradton® project has created an inter-professional learning and teaching resource that promotes insight into real personal histories. Experiences are presented online in film, audio and transcript by service eligible users or by simulated patients and presented in accessible media rich scenarios.

Students will also 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.

Students will study online e-learning packages in Culture and Diversity and Information Governance in the NHS, they will have achieved Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the Dementia Core Skills Education and Training Framework.

Approximately half of the learning time will be dedicated to placement learning where students will have the opportunity to practice and develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary to become a physician associate in a supervised patient setting and receiving regular formative feedback from the clinical supervisor. Students will learn from their experiences in the practice setting through reflecting on supervised learning events (SLEs) and the continual development of a programme level e-portfolio. Students will undertake a programme of Mandatory Pre-Placement Training (MPPPT) before accessing clinical practice placement areas. These sessions will include: Basic Life Support, Moving and Handling, Fire Safety, Student and Patient Safety, Equality Diversity and Human Rights, Infection Control, Information Governance.
3. Assessment Strategy

When designing the assessments for this course we have closely considered students future career and framed these around “what does a day one physician associate need to be able to do in their practice”? We have built in a range of assessments, including those which are formative and summative.

Formative assessments

Formative assessments are those which are low stakes, meaning they have low or no impact on students final grades, they are designed to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses through reflection and feedback and can help us recognise when students might need further support from staff. Formative assessments will occur in University and in practice.

In University, students will receive regular and timely feedback on the development of their knowledge and skills through:

- Feedback on selected reflections of learning experiences
- Feedback on case studies by peers and staff
- Mock Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)
- Online multiple choice question tests
- Team based learning activities including application exercises and immediate feedback on Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs)

Whilst on practice placements, students will receive regular and timely feedback on the development of their knowledge and skills through supervised learning events, including:

- Mini-clinical evaluation exercise (mini-CEX)
- Direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS)
- Case based discussion (CBD)
- Running small teaching sessions

Summative assessments

Summative assessments are those which evaluate students learning, usually at the end of a module, and count towards their final grades.

Synoptic assessment

A synoptic assessment tests student’s ability to combine elements of their learning from different parts of a programme, i.e. different modules, and to show their accumulated knowledge, skills and understanding of the course. The synoptic summative assessment will be through the successful completion of all elements of an e-portfolio which students will build throughout the programme and hand in at the end of the course. This e-portfolio will include:

- Evidence of satisfactory demonstration of core procedural skills through Direct Observation of Procedural Skills
- Record of clinical placement hours achieved in each setting
• Evidence of learning and reflections on learning experiences and supervised learning events
• Final assessed reflective essay
• Record of engagement with Supervised Learning Events
• Clinical supervisors end of placement reports
• Feedback from colleagues on overall attitude, performance and behavior

Module assessment

Students will also complete a range of assessments within the different modules, again a range of different assessment methods are used. These include:

• Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs)
• Extended Matching Questions (EMQs)
• Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)
• Reflective writing
• Practical skills assessment
• Peer feedback
• Team Based Learning ongoing Individual Readiness Assurance Tests (iRATs) and Team Readiness Assurance Tests (tRATs)

Assessment Regulation

This Programme conforms to the standard University Regulations which are available at the following link:

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

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:

An undergraduate Degree 2:1 (or above) in a Life Science, Biomedical Science, or Healthcare subject from a UK University or overseas equivalent.

Experience in healthcare may contribute & compensate if the above requirements have not been fully met and will be considered on a case by case basis and in accordance with the University of Bradford guidance on recognition of prior learning (University of Bradford, 2014).

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).

Students will be required to succeed in an interview process which incorporates values-based recruitment principles aligned with the NHS Constitution.
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.

Physician Associates who are already qualified and are registered with the Managed Voluntary Register (or any organisation which follows) will be considered for direct entry to the MSc award through completion of the module ‘Pursuing a Clinical Dissertation’.

Minor Modification Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version Number</th>
<th>Brief description of Modification</th>
<th>Date of Approval (Faculty Board)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New module codes for ‘Patients and their Medicines’ and ‘Integrated Medical Sciences and Professional Practice’</td>
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