University of Sheffield

Programme Specification

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.

The content of our courses is reviewed annually to make sure it's up-to-date and relevant. Individual modules are occasionally updated or withdrawn. This is in response to discoveries through our world-leading research; funding changes; professional accreditation requirements; student or employer feedback; outcomes of reviews; and variations in staff or student numbers. In the event of any change we will inform students and take reasonable steps to minimise disruption.

Programme Details

1. Programme title	Physician Associate Studies		
2. Award type	Master of Medical Science		
3. Programme details	**FHEQ Level:** 7	**Mode of Study:** Full time	**Duration:** 2 years
4. Faculty	Faculty of Health		
5. School	**Owning:** School of Medicine and Population Health		
6. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	General Medical Council (GMC)		
7. HECoS code *Select between one and three codes from the HECoS vocabulary.*	**Code:** 100750 **Percentage:** 100	**Code:** **Percentage:**	**Code:** **Percentage:**
Programme code(s) (internal use)	SMPT057		

9. Programme aims

The programme aims to:	
A1	To develop competent practitioners for 'first contact' care: Primary Care and Acute Services.
A2	To offer a unique opportunity for students, drawing on the high quality medical undergraduate curriculum but also national and international links enjoyed by the University.
A3	To support development of the university's postgraduate portfolio.
A4	To enable students to critically appraise and evaluate the theoretical and empirical elements of Physician Associate Care, developing academic skills linking theory to practice.
A5	To provide an environment which develops students' leadership and problem solving skills in contemporary health care settings.

10. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding (K) On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:	
K1	At certificate level students will demonstrate in depth knowledge of the normal structure and function of the following body systems (Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry) 1. Cardiovascular and Respiratory. 2. Gastrointestinal (including Liver). 3. Musculoskeletal and Peripheral Nervous System (including Skin). 4. Endocrine, Metabolic and Blood systems.
K2	Demonstrate in depth understanding of how societal and epidemiological factors (public health) affect health across, and within defined populations including an appreciation of the effects of deprivation, disability and ethnicity.
In addition Diploma level candidates are expected to:	
K3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how disturbances in the normal structure and function of the systems outlined in K1 and K2 contribute to the development of health problems related to the core conditions outlined in the Matrix Specification of Core Clinical Conditions for the Physician Associate, including a basic understanding of immunology, microbiology and histology.
K4	Have an understanding of basic theory of health education and methods of health information technology that can be used both to promote health and manage individual health problems.
K5	Demonstrate knowledge of the normal structure, patterns and functions in the following areas: 1. Sexual health and reproduction. 2. Development, growth and ageing of children and young people.
In addition at Masters level candidates are expected to demonstrate:	
K6	Application of critical and evaluative problem solving approaches in theory and practice.
K7	Critical and evaluative knowledge of the application of research methods.

K8	Critical and evaluative knowledge of the application of service improvement.
Skills and other attributes (S) *When considering the skills and attributes developed in this programme, please refer to the Sheffield Graduate attributes (SGAs). SGAs can be found here* On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:	
Please refer to the Physician Associate Curriculum available at Faculty of Physician Associates website here as well as the GMC learning outcomes here	
S1	**History taking and consultation skills -** Students will be able to take a full patient history appropriate to the clinical situation, including any relevant psychological and social factors and structuring their interview so that patients (or carers) are encouraged to express their concerns, expectations and understanding of their condition.
S2	**Examination Skills (general) -** Student will be able to perform clinical examinations tailored to the needs of the patient and the demands of the clinical situation, including all of neurological, musculoskeletal, mental state, male and female uro-genital, breast, ophthalmic, oro-pharyngeal, cardiovascular, respiratory, abdominal, and dermatological examinations.
S3	**Specific procedural skills -** Students will be able to perform and interpret routine first line investigative and therapeutic procedures in general medicine associated with the main body systems outlined in K1 and K2 e.g. ECG, Lung Function tests, Urinary Catheterisation. A full list of the core procedural skills is described in the Physician Associate Curriculum
S4	Students will be able to critically reflect on their own practice, identify learning needs and recognise the importance of keeping up to date with clinical practice and lifelong learning.
S5	Students will be able to work effectively in a team and have effective personal time-management skills.
In addition at Diploma level:	
S6	Students will demonstrate the ability to perform a holistic assessment, define clinical problems, formulate differential diagnoses and to identify when information/data is incomplete and further evaluation is required.
S7	Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret the findings from history and examination and identify the need for additional investigations appropriately.
S8	Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate and implement appropriate management plans in collaboration with the patient, carers and other health professionals, recognising the relevance of age and social circumstances and the requirement for referral when necessary.
S9	Students will be able to demonstrate how to determine and propose appropriate therapeutic plans within the scope of PA role, including medication whilst working under medical delegation clauses.
S10	Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to write accurate and legible prescriptions for primary and secondary settings for signature by supervising clinician.
S11	Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to interpret results (including screening) and identify potential follow up investigations within the PA role in line with the course curriculum document here.

S12	Students will be able to show their ability to develop and maintain clinical practice that fosters an ongoing therapeutic relationship, informed choice, shared decision-making and patient / carer involvement.
S13	Students will be able to recognise serious illness and respond appropriately including when monitoring a patient's condition and response to treatment in acute settings.
S14	Students will demonstrate an understanding of how uncertainty is unavoidable in clinical practice and the ability to employ cognitive and practical strategies to manage uncertainty when it arises.
S15	Students will be able to maintain accurate contemporaneous and relevant records both within their own practice and within teams.
S16	Students will demonstrate effective multi-agency working and identify when to share information in a timely manner in line with legal and ethical requirements.
S17	Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to teach effectively.
S18	Students will demonstrate the ability to recognise gaps in service provision (service evaluation) and contribute to service development where required.
S19	Students will be able to recognise situations of potential risk, either clinically or to people and take actions to eliminate/minimise immediate and future dangers, including moving and handling procedures.
In addition at Masters level:	
S20	The ability to prepare a quality improvement proposal as a basis for the work required to produce a Masters level dissertation.

Professional behaviours (B) The postgraduate diploma in PA studies is a vocational qualification preparing students for professional registration and work as health professionals within the NHS and abroad after graduation. As such, at the end of the course students will be required to demonstrate the following professional behaviours:	
B1	Behave with integrity and sensitivity and act as an ambassador for the role of a Physician Associate.
B2	Inform patients and others about the nature of the PA role as and when necessary.
B3	Value the roles of team members within health and social care, maintain relationships and communicate effectively.
B4	Recognise the importance of responding to complaints appropriately and in a timely manner.
B5	Recognise and demonstrate the importance of the legal and ethical principles underpinning equality and diversity.
B6	Recognise and uphold legal and ethical behaviours (autonomy, confidentiality, consent) and minimise the risk of harm, litigation or risk.
In addition at Diploma level:	

B7	Recognise the limits of clinical competence/scope of practice with their supervising clinician.
B8	Recognise the importance of shared decision-making and developing a therapeutic relationship, taking actions to promote concordance in treatments offered during practice.
B9	Be aware of the importance of 'interface' communication between teams and take action to maximise handover of information to streamline care.
B10	Demonstrate the importance of clinical governance (including Audit and Significant Event Recording) participating when appropriate (including their own work) and promote a learning environment.
B11	Be aware of the safeguarding procedures for vulnerable adults, children and families and take action when issues arise, including sharing information in a timely manner.
B12	Recognise the economic constraints to the NHS and seek to minimise waste of resources.
B13	Uphold the principles of the National Health Service.
In addition at Masters level:	
B14	Demonstrate the ability to organize and manage their own time and work.

11. Learning and teaching methods *(this should include a summary of methods used throughout the programme, including any unique features and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

The programme includes a number of approaches to teaching and learning, including lectures, small group work, practical skills based sessions and project work. Although the programme is modular, the integration of teaching and learning across the modules, in order to achieve the learning outcomes, is an essential part of the programme. Students will be required to be self-directed and motivated in their learning to make the most of the programme. Students will be required to actively engage in significant independent study, facilitated by the use of library and web based resources, the clinical skills centre facilities and during clinical placement.

A range of assessment approaches, based on best practice within medical education, will be used to assess knowledge and skills across the programme. As with the integrated approach to teaching knowledge, skills and behaviours, a number of assessments will also be integrated.
The table on page 11 presents an overview of the teaching and assessment approach for each of the learning outcomes.

12. Assessment and feedback methods *(this should include the range of types of methods used and should be written with a student focus as this information will display to current students and applicants i.e. prospectus)*

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

The learning outcomes are carefully matched to the most appropriate method of assessment. The assessment is blueprinted across each of the modules to ensure that each of the learning outcomes is appropriately assessed and across not only each of the modules but also the programme overall. The medical and health sciences modules will be assessed through SBA and EMQ based papers. Clinical skills

will be assessed through a mastery approach; students are required to successfully achieve the learning outcomes in order to progress.

History taking and physical examination will be assessed by OSCE and workplace based assessment whilst on placement. Professionalism will be assessed through written assignment, and observation of practice and during OSCE examinations and workplace based assessment, but also other mechanisms such as engagement with formal processes and procedures.

All assessors are fully trained in assessment methods through a mandatory staff development programme, which includes the following key areas: blueprinting, question writing, standardization and psychometric analysis.

In addition to the aforementioned summative approaches, there will be a number of formative assessments during the course.

Students are fully informed of the University requirements of fitness to practice and plagiarism and how these are dealt with through the University Fitness to Practice and discipline procedures. All written work is submitted via plagiarism detection software.

Version Number:	**Purpose / Change:**	**Cohort affected: (academic year and level)**	**Date change approved:**
1			September 2024
2			December 2025

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