

**PGDip Physician Associate Programme (level 7) (full-time)
For students entering in 2016/7**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Life Sciences Faculty
Programme length:	2 years
Date of specification:	04/Aug/2017
Programme Director:	Dr Simone Magee
Board of Studies:	Pharmacy
Accreditation:	The role of Physician Associates in the National Health Service is emerging and the oversight of education, training and practice of Physician Associates is currently shared by the Department of Health, the UK and Ireland Universities Board for Physician Associate Education and the Faculty of Physician Associates, Royal College of Physicians of London. The United Kingdom and Ireland Universities Board for Physician Associate Education (UKIUBPAE) peer reviews programmes prior to commencement. Graduates who pass the Physician Associate National Certification Examination (PANCE) will be able to register with the Faculty of Physician Associates, Royal College of Physicians of London, who maintain the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR) voluntary register.

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to produce graduates who have the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours to function as Physician Associates (and to have their qualification nationally recognised) and the personal and intellectual attributes necessary for life-long professional development. Such graduates will be:

- safe practitioners under medical supervision in a wide variety of clinical settings, with patients from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds
- expert communicators who are empathic in a manner appropriate to a healthcare profession
- aware of health inequalities and the challenges of working in a multicultural environment
- aware of the limits of their competence and determined to act within those limits
- trained in the context of multi-professional working in a team environment
- adept in the use of C&IT (Communication and Information Technology) skills for healthcare
- capable and motivated lifelong learners continually engaged in active professional development
- understanding of the need to maintain and promote health, as well as to cure or palliate disease and aware of their obligations to the wider community as well as to individuals
- trained to integrate theoretical and clinical learning

Transferable skills

Students will develop skills used in this career that are also used in other careers.

- Developing and using computerized medical records
- Giving injections, drugs, and other medications
- Helping people understand health care instructions
- Observing and analysing physical problems
- Planning health care treatments
- Treating physical or mental problems
- Working as a member of a health services team

Programme content

All modules are compulsory. PA1 will be undertaken by all students at the start of the programme. Students may rotate around other modules according to the availability of clinical placement training.

Code	Name	Credits	Level
PMM1PA	Pre-clinical module	60	7

Part-time or modular arrangements

Part time study is not appropriate for this programme

Progression requirements

All modules are compulsory. To qualify for the award of Postgraduate Diploma, students must achieve an average mark of 50 or more for the programme as a whole and attain a mark of at least 50% in both modules and in all summative written and OSCE assessments. Students must also submit and pass all portfolio assessments. Successful completion of the pre-clinical module, PMM1PA, will be required to progress onto the clinical module, PMM2PA.

Summary of Teaching and Assessment

Students will be required to maintain a portfolio of learning which includes a record of patient encounters and acquisition of core clinical skills. Students will be required to include reflective accounts of critical learning encounters as well as formal case reports. The portfolio will also contain evidence provided by other healthcare practitioners regarding the performance of the students. Students will also be required to submit their portfolio of learning for summative assessment, which will be marked on a Pass/Fail basis.

Students will also complete formative in-module assessments of knowledge and its application to clinical scenarios.

Summative assessments will include written examinations, such as single best answer multiple choice questions and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE). These assessments will prepare students for the Physician Associate National Certification Examination, which takes the same format.

To qualify for the award of Postgraduate Diploma, students must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50 or more in 120 credits (level 7) with no module mark below 50. If further criteria are met, as specified in the University's Marking Criteria and Classification Framework for Postgraduate Taught Programmes, a Diploma may be awarded with a Merit or Distinction.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

Passing categories:

70-100% Distinction

60-69% Merit

50-59% Good standard

Failing categories:

40-49% Work Below Standard Threshold

0-39% Unsatisfactory work

University regulations for re-sitting assessments and re-submissions will be followed.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a 2:1 or above in an appropriate Life Sciences Degree (e.g. Biology, Biochemistry, Medical Science, Health Science, Nutrition, Nursing, Physiotherapy, Pharmacy) or equivalent qualification, with at least GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics at Grade C or above. Applicants who do not meet these academic standards but who have substantial experience in the healthcare setting will be considered on a case by case basis. In addition to consideration of academic qualifications and relevant experience, students will be required to have enhanced DBS and health checks.

Admissions Tutor: Dr Simone Magee

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@il) computer-based

teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see www.reading.ac.uk/student

Students on the programme will be allocated a Physician Associate as their tutor.

The Centre for Inter-Professional Postgraduate Education and Training (CIPPET) has experience within its current programmes of using workshops, seminars and enquiry based learning. The approaches used within the PA programme will be tailored for the learning to be achieved. For example enquiry based learning, based on patient case histories will be used to support integrated learning and to encourage deep learning. Seminars, led by specialist speakers, will be used to focus on the depth within a particular topic. Workshops using equipment and simulated role play will provide an opportunity for student practitioners to practise skills necessary for the PA role.

CIPPET also has considerable experience of using Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs). We use the opportunity to video these in the Pharmacy Practice consultation rooms to enable diagnostic and formative feedback to be provided to the student practitioners. These assessment methodologies will be used in the PA programme.

Students will be expected to submit elements of the portfolio for feedback during each module. Students will also have an opportunity for in course tests which will provide both diagnostic and formative feedback. There will be in-class tests to assess students' knowledge. Where possible the style of these tests will mirror the question style used in the national examination.

Career prospects

The NHS has recognised Physician Associates as part of NHS careers <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/explore-by-career/doctors/careers-in-medicine/physician-associate/> The Royal College of Physicians has called for the development of the role in acute medical settings "The roles of advanced nurse practitioner and physician associate should be evaluated, developed and incorporated into the future clinical team in a role and at a level of responsibility appropriate to their competencies." <http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/sites/default/files/future-hospital-commission-report.pdf>

It is anticipated that all students would be able to secure work as a physician associate. Locally there are good opportunities for employment, not least at RBH. The local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) (e.g. West Berks CCG) are also experiencing staff recruitment difficulties. Nationally it is expected that the career opportunities for physician associates will be improved in the near future by formal recognition. Subject to the profession achieving statutory regulation it is anticipated that PAs would also be able to achieve prescribing rights, following suitable additional training, which would enhance their role in the NHS.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

There will not be opportunities for study overseas.

Programme Outcomes

The outcomes of the programme are dictated by the need to satisfy the Competence and Curriculum Framework published by the Department of Health and updated in 2012.

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

The theoretical (i.e. non-clinical) knowledge subject areas to be covered in the core syllabus is:

Anatomy
Biochemistry
Communication
Development, growth and ageing
Ethics and law

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The teaching and learning methods will recognise that students will be adult learners. Workshops, enquiry and problem based learning will be used to enable students to acquire the theoretical knowledge to underpin the clinical aspects of the programme.

Assessment

Healthcare policy
Health education
Health information technology
Histology
Immunology and microbiology
Pathology
Pharmacology and therapeutics
Physiology
Psychology
Public health and epidemiology
Sexual health & reproduction
Sociology
Teaching and assessing

Knowledge and understanding will be assessed through regular in course tests.

Summative assessment will include both written examination and OSCE. The format of the summative assessments aligns with the national assessment set by the Faculty of Physician Associates.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - *able to*:

Diagnose and refer appropriately for the list of patient presentations outlined in the Competence and Curriculum Framework.

Professional Behaviour & Probity

- Consistently behave with integrity and sensitivity
- Behave as an ambassador for the role of Physician Associate, acting professionally and behaving considerately towards other professionals and patients.
- Recognise and work within the limits of your professional competence and scope of practice and within the scope of practice of your supervising clinician
- Maintain effective relationships with colleagues from other health and social care professions.
- Inform patients, carers and others of the nature of the clinical role.
- Contribute to the effectiveness of a clinical learning environment.
- Be a good role model

Common core skills and knowledge when working with children, young people and families

- Demonstrate effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families
- Demonstrate effective observation and judgement in children's and young people's development
- Recognise when to take appropriate action in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child
- Intervene appropriately when supporting transitions between stages of development and/or services
- Demonstrate effective multiagency working through awareness of roles and responsibilities within other services
- Identify when to share information in a timely and accurate manner while respecting

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The teaching and learning methods will recognise that students will be adult learners. Workshops, enquiry and problem based learning will be used to enable students to acquire the intellectual skills to underpin the clinical aspects of the programme.

The intellectual skills will also be reinforced during the practical learning undertaken during the clinical placements.

Assessment

Students will be required to maintain a portfolio of learning. Students will be required to include reflective accounts of critical learning encounters and formal case reports. These logs will allow tutors to assess student's intellectual skills. The portfolio will also contain evidence provided by other healthcare practitioners regarding the performance of the students.

Students will also be required to sit both written examinations and OSCEs. The format of the summative assessments aligns with the national assessment set by the Faculty of Physician Associates.

legislation on the control and confidentiality of information

Interpreting evidence/determining the requirement for additional evidence

- Interpret the findings from the consultation (history, physical examination and mental state examination) in order to determine the need for further investigation and, with the patient/carer, the appropriate direction of patient management
- Understand the indication for initial and follow-up investigations
- Select, interpret and act upon appropriate investigations
- Determine the relevance of screening tests for a given condition

Clinical judgement in diagnosis and management

- Formulate a differential diagnosis based on objective and subjective data
- Make use of clinical judgement to select the most likely diagnosis in relation to all information obtained
- Recognise when information/data is incomplete and work safely within these
- Recognise key diagnostic errors and the issues relating to diagnosis in the face of incomplete data
- Recognise when a clinical situation is beyond their competence and seek appropriate support

Risk management

- Recognise potential clinical risk situations and take appropriate action
- Recognise risks to themselves, the team, patients and others and takes appropriate action to eliminate/minimise danger
- Value the importance of clinical governance and participate as directed

C. Practical skills - *able to:*

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The teaching and learning methods will recognise that students will be adult learners. Practical workshops will be used to enable students to acquire the practical skills prior to undertaking the clinical aspects of the programme.

The practical skills will then be reinforced during the clinical placements.

Assessment

Students will be required to maintain a portfolio of learning which includes a log all patient encounters and evidence of acquisition of core clinical skills. These logs will allow tutors to assess student's clinical encounters and the quality of clinical rotation sites. Students will be required to include reflective accounts of critical learning encounters and formal case reports. The portfolio will also contain evidence provided by other healthcare practitioners regarding the performance of the students.

D. Transferable skills - able to:

Awareness of guiding principles and current developments in the NHS

- Practice in a manner which is grounded in the underlying principles of the NHS as a patient centred service, free at the point of delivery
- Maintain an awareness of national and local guidelines / legal requirements, both generally and, in particular, as relevant to their area of practice
- Maintain an awareness of any new developments in the structure and function of the NHS and particularly in relation to their area of practice
- Demonstrate an understanding of change processes within the NHS and fulfil their broader professional role by participating in national and local consultation processes

Teamwork

- Value the roles fulfilled by other members of the health and social care team and communicate with them effectively
- Effectively manage patients at the interface of different specialties and agencies, including primary/secondary care, imaging and laboratory specialties
- Effectively and efficiently hand over responsibility to other health and social care professionals

Time/resource management

- Prioritise workload using time and resources effectively
- Recognise the economic constraints to the NHS and seek to minimise waste

Maintenance of good practice

- Critically evaluate own practice to identify learning/developmental needs and identify and utilise learning opportunities
- Use evidence, guidelines and audit (including significant event analysis) to benefit patient care and improve professional practice

Ethical and legal issues

Identify and address ethical and legal issues, which may impact on patient care, carers and society. Such issues will include:

- ensuring patients' rights are protected (e.g. children's rights including Gillick competency: patients' right to participate in making decisions about their care)
- maintaining confidentiality
- obtaining informed consent

Students will also be required to sit both written examinations and OSCEs. The format of the summative assessments aligns with the national assessment set by the Faculty of Physician Associates.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The teaching and learning methods will recognise that students will be adult learners. Workshops, enquiry and problem based learning will be used to enable students to acquire the transferable skills to underpin the clinical aspects of the programme.

The transferable skills will also be reinforced during the practical learning undertaken during the clinical placements.

Assessment

Students will be required to maintain a portfolio of learning. Students will be required to include reflective accounts of critical learning encounters and formal case reports. These logs will allow tutors to assess student's transferable skills. The portfolio will also contain evidence provided by other healthcare practitioners regarding the performance of the students.

Students will also be required to sit both written examinations and OSCEs. The format of the summative assessments aligns with the national assessment set by the Faculty of Physician Associates.

- providing appropriate care for vulnerable patients (including vulnerable adults, children and families in need)
- responding to complaints

Equality and diversity

Recognise the importance of people's rights in accordance with legislation, policies and procedures

Act in a way that:

- acknowledges and recognises people's expressed beliefs, preferences and choices
- respects diversity
- values people as individuals
- incorporates an understanding of one's own behaviour and its effect on others

Identify and take action when own or others' behaviour undermines equality and diversity.

Public health

Address issues and demonstrate techniques involved in studying the effect of diseases on communities and individuals including:

- assessment of community needs in relation to how services are provided
- recognition of genetic, environmental and social causes of, and influences on the prevention of illness and disease
- application of the principles of promoting health and preventing disease

Please note - This specification provides a concise 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 he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.