Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
MSc Physician Associate	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	**MW1PAS1**
UCAS Code:	**N/A**
Name of Final Award:	**Master of Science, MSc**
Level of Qualification:	**Level 7**
Regime of Delivery:	**Attendance**
Mode(s) of Delivery:	**Full Time**
Typical Length of Study (Years):	**2**
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	**Faculty of PA under General Medical Council**

Brief Description of the Programme*

This two year Master's degree aims to provide students with the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to become a Physician Associate. The Physician Associate role has been developed within the United Kingdom in response to a number of healthcare and workforce drivers; this includes current medical workforce shortages across primary and secondary care and also the need for a flexible workforce that can respond to service requirements across all sectors of healthcare.

The programme draws on broad science principles whereby anatomical and patho-physiological processes are incorporated to provide the student with the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully undertake the training in preparation for the world of work in healthcare. It will be of interest to individuals who have current experience or interest in the field of health/medicine and have the ability to study and produce work at postgraduate level. The programme enables the concept of student-centered approach to learning to come to the fore, giving students ownership of their own learning, which is placed within a robust pedagogical framework.

It is anticipated that applicants will be science undergraduate students, studying either biomedical science, biology, life sciences or sport or exercise science. The programme has a strong employability focus to enable students to become competent physician associates. Links with healthcare partners are key. The Faculty has a number of well-established partnership with health organisations to enable enhancement of the student experience and to promote practice-based learning.

Programme Aims

1	Equip the student with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required to practice as a physician associate in line with national standards.
2.	Prepare students to work in a safe, competent, accountable and professional manner in line with national standards.

3.	Nurture a commitment in students for continual self-reflection and professional development with a critical awareness of the ethical and legal issues related to the discipline.
4.	Prepare students to critically examine health inequalities and the challenges of working in a multicultural environment with patients from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds
5.	Develop students to critically appraise and utilise the evidence to underpin clinical practice.

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme a graduate will be able to:	
Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)	
K1	Demonstrate a systematic understanding and critical awareness of current medical problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of professional practice.
K2	Competently deal with complex medical issues, making sound clinical judgements in the absence of complete clinical data
K3	Utilise a broad science knowledge base, demonstrating a sound understanding of clinical and medical sciences, including pharmacology, therapeutics, public health and epidemiology, to underpin patient assessment, clinical decision making and clinical management of patients across the lifespan.
K4	Synthesise conclusions from a research project to demonstrate an independent perspective and originality in the application of this knowledge to develop recommendations for future research or practice innovation.
K5	Critically appraise and utilise the evidence base and exemplars of best practice to underpin clinical practice and for advanced scholarship, demonstrating originality in the application of knowledge to practice.
Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)	
C1	Critically evaluate research and associated methodologies in order to review clinical and research data and evaluate outcomes of clinical interventions/treatments/management plans in the discipline.
C2	Demonstrate original application of scientific knowledge, together with practical understanding of how established research techniques are used to create and interpret knowledge within the discipline.
C3	Demonstrate professionalism, self-direction and originality in problem solving, planning and the execution of patient management plans.
C4	Conduct safe, appropriate and effective history taking, clinical examination, and consultation with patients across the lifespan and in a range of clinical settings.

Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)	
S1	Communicate in a professional and effective manner with a wide range of individuals.
S2	Utilise up-to-date information and communication technology.
S3	Conduct a client/patient relationship in a professional manner, demonstrating a critical awareness of ethical and legal issues.
S4	Manage time, prioritise workloads, recognise and deal with personal emotions and stress and demonstrate decision making in complex and unpredictable situations.
S5	Critically review one's own clinical experience in order to recognise and understand success or failure, demonstrating autonomy in taking appropriate steps towards improvement, and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.
Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)	
L1	Utilise professional relationships across the scope of professional practice in order to work effectively within the interdisciplinary team, with both direct and indirect supervision, and where appropriate teaching and supervising others.
L2	Demonstrate appropriate and verbal, non-verbal and written communication skills, where appropriate receiving, eliciting and transmitting information, in all professional situations.
L3	Produce coherent and accurate clinical and professional records.
L4	Critically assess and manage risk in all aspects of professional practice.

Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study which will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty which will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our Academic Advice webpages provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University.

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to sector developments.

Level Seven

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
CL743	General and Adult Medicine as a Physician Associate: Theory and Practice	60	core	No
CL744	Specialist and Acute Medicine as a Physician Associate: Theory and Practice	60	core	No
PF728	Generating Knowledge	15	core	No
PF729	Dissertation	45	core	No

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the Academic Advice pages for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

A variety of teaching methods are used within this programme: lectures, workshops and seminars, group and individual tutorials, practical learning in a skills laboratory, live performance, case-studies, field studies, industrial placements, working in small groups, independent study and research, and technology-enhanced and blended learning.

A range of specific learning and teaching mechanisms is outlined below:

Seminars: enable open discussion, contribution by lecturers, practitioners and health related speakers. Students are enabled to practice the articulation of ideas, question, test their knowledge and listen to other's points of view, thus enabling their critical and clinical decision making abilities to develop.

Lectures: provide information and opportunities for visual presentation of ideas, concepts and theories. Students may also be involved in interactive activities which have some of the characteristics of seminars listed above.

Skills/Simulation laboratory sessions: students will work in small groups that aim to develop collaboration, communication skills, networking, through which they share and support each other to learn and acquire vocational experience of tests and procedures conducted in a skills laboratory setting.

Visits to/from health partners: enables the development and awareness of current practice in the field of health (acute and community settings). This is essential to developing an understanding of current practices, career opportunities, and preparing students for working life as a physician associate. Contact with practitioners, who may also be teachers, enables the development of language, concepts, research approaches and identity formation through an ontological approach to discipline specific learning.

Workshop: authentic scenarios form the foundation of simulation activity, whereby students will be introduced to and rehearse clinical skills in a safe environment. Formative assessment will be predicated on briefing and debriefing to allow students to receive real-time feedback on their performance. Video analysis provides students with opportunities for self-evaluation. Up to a total

of 200 hours will be assigned to simulated learning, which will be counted against clinical practice hours.

Case studies: seminars will focus on an array of clinical case studies, which will be the focus for problem-based learning activity. Students will explore and discuss the components of those case studies to identify the key issues, processes and systems inherent within them, to learn from successful and unsuccessful care as well as being able to iterate the nature of good and bad experiences. The case studies will enable the students to explore the nature of medicine, to enable the development of knowledge and problem solving skills.

Self-directed study: develops students' independent working, autonomy and self-awareness. The ability to manage projects, manage time and identify own learning needs is supported by formal and informal learning opportunities throughout the programme. Self-directed study is key to successfully managing and achieving the course learning outcomes. The Learning Development Unit is available to support students with learning difficulties and those wishing to enhance their study skills.

Tutorials: both individual and in small groups help to focus students on evaluating their own work and in identifying directions for study. Lecturers will question and advise students, presenting alternatives and challenging decisions, in order to help students to realise their full potential and to develop critical and evaluative skills.

Employability: a strong employability strand runs throughout the programme, which ensures that students are able to develop the range of clinical competencies and associated knowledge and skills related to the role of the Physician Associate. Links with healthcare partners are critical to this effect and the team will aim to develop current links further to improve the student experience within the acute and community setting.

Clinical Procedural Skills Passport: the passport is designed to document the students' progress in achieving competence in the following procedural skills i) general aspects of procedural skills; ii) diagnostic procedures; and iii) therapeutic procedures.

Problem Based Learning (PBL): this approach is both active and student centred. It is driven by students' own decisions about appropriate ways in which an issue or scenario might be approached. PBL is ideally positioned to foster a deep level of engagement with problems that are multifaceted and complex. The exploratory nature of enquiry allows students to work together to grapple with different ways of looking at ideas and issues, and to think creatively about problems that do not possess simple or unique solutions. Research and investigations are carried out into areas that the students decide are essential for a proper response to the issue, allowing them to discover how to research by engaging in practical examples.

Attendance Requirements on the Programme: The awards of physician associate confer eligibility to undertake the UK Physician Associate National Examination requires specific hours to complete. Students are expect to attend at least %80 of the modules (PF743 and PF744) hours and %100 placement hours. The attendance will be monitored and students not achieving the minimum number of hours may fail the module/s or the programme.

Practice learning / Completion of practice hours

Over the course of the programme, students will undertake a minimum of 1,600 hours of clinical practice (up to 200 hours of simulation) in order to achieve competency framework requirements. Practice will cover a variety of clinical placements, such as General Practice, Acute Medicine,

Accident and Emergency, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Mental Health, Surgery and towards the end of their programme they will have an opportunity to undertake an elective placement in areas such as: Cardiology, Gastroenterology, Dermatology, Neurology etc.

During their clinical placements, students will work on average an 8 hour day and across the 24 hour period to include, where appropriate, weekends and night duty since this exposes them to different medical challenges and to different working systems. Whilst in the clinical setting the students will be able to apply their learning to real patients/clients under the direct supervision of their clinical supervisor.

Students will be assessed in terms of professional behavior both within the classroom setting and whilst on clinical placement. There is a requirement for the professional and ethical assessment to be signed off at the end of each placement by their clinical supervisor and this will be held in their Practice Assessment Document. If a student fails a placement they will become an associate student and will be required to retrieve that placement before they can progress into the next year. If two placements are failed in a year this will result in the student failing the programme.

Additional Course Cost

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

The students will pay for their own stethoscope and the National Examination Fee as indicated in Faculty of Physician Associate webpage. Students will receive a bursary from HEE for cost towards attending placement such as travel.

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad / Work Based Learning (Hours)
Year One	306	868	576
Year Two	145	881	1024

Assessment Methods

The Assessment and Examination webpages provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

The following assessment activities are used on this programme:
Formative assessments will be held at regular intervals during the modules to help the students prepare for the summative elements.

The summative assessment strategy consists of the following elements:

Single based answer Examination
Objective Structured Clinical Examination
Case Study
Clinical Procedural Skills Passport
80% Attendance Requirement
Professional Behaviour
Completion of Clinical Hours
Critical appraisal of a research paper
Dissertation

Concerning CL743 & CL744, the pass mark for each component is 50%. Students are required to achieve a minimum of 80% attendance to qualify for entry to the examinations. This will only apply to the following modules: CL743 and CL744. The remaining modules on the programme follow the standard pass mark of 40%.

Any student not meeting the minimum 80% attendance for either CL743 or CL744 will not be permitted to undertake the National Examination. This will be classed as a referral and referral classes must be attended prior to a second attempt.

Where OSCEs have more than one station or element, students will be required to pass 80% of the total number of OSCE stations with a calibrated station score of 50% or above AND pass the OSCE overall with an average calibrated station mark over 50% or above.

Students who are referred on any elements of CL743 will be offered the opportunity to retake that element, however will not be permitted to proceed into year 2 until all elements have been passed. Due to the intense format of the programme and there only being 1 intake per academic year, students will be unable to resume their studies immediately after passing their referred elements due to missed placements. The student will be required to become an affiliate student for the remaining year, then commence their second year with the following cohort. On successfully completing the referred element, and prior to resuming their studies, they would be required to do a period of revision, undertake an MCQ and skills assessment OSCE to ensure they are fit to resume their studies and clinical practice placements in year 2. Those that fail to achieve the required level and/or have had a break in studies for more than 1 academic year, will not proceed to year 2 and may be eligible to be awarded a PG Cert Clinical Sciences.

Classification

Calculation of final award:	100% Level 7

For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our Results webpages. These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the Application webpages for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our general entry requirements for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

Expected entry qualifications, knowledge and skills that the entrant will have on entry to the programme:

- Achievement of a first degree, minimum of a 2:2, in a life science, e.g. Biology, Biochemistry, Biomedical Science, Medical Science, Nursing, Physiotherapy or equivalent qualification or health-related subject from a UK university or an equivalent overseas qualification. Advice on equivalent status of overseas awards will be obtained from the National Academic Recognition and Information Centre for the UK (NARIC™). Certified translation of any 9
- A Level Chemistry Grade C or equivalent.
- GCSE Maths and English Grade B or above.
- Demonstrate proficiency in the English language, e.g. achieve an IELTS score of at least 7.5 in all sections or equivalent (in line with the General Medical Council requirements.
- Have experience of working with people, for example, in a health or social care context.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal qualities, motivation, communication skills and understanding of the PA role during the selection process.

A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and occupational health assessment will be required by all applicants prior to acceptance on the course. Candidates who fail the DBS check and/or occupational health assessment will not be given entry onto the course.
The DBS in the United Kingdom does not currently conduct overseas criminal record checks. Therefore, International applicants, those without British Citizenship and British Citizens with a significant period of overseas residency require a criminal records check or certificate of good conduct from their home/overseas country prior to entry onto the course. A UK DBS check will be required after enrolment. Should the DBS and/or occupational health assessment be unsatisfactory the student will be referred to the Fitness-to-Practise panel.

Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check?	Choose an item

Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

The programme has a strong employability focus to enable students to become competent physician associates. Links with healthcare partners are key. The Faculty has a number of well-established partnership with health organisations to enable enhancement of the student experience and to promote practice-based learning.
Opportunities available for students after completion of the award:

- Graduates can make use of the Careers and Employment Service of the University for two years following graduation.
- Graduates can progress to the world of work as a physician associate in a range of clinical environments, such as in an acute hospital, the community setting, general medicine, surgery, emergency care etc.
- Graduates may be eligible to enroll onto an MPhil/PhD or a Professional Doctorate programme at the University, or at another University.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	**Bucks New University**
Language of Study:	**English**
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	There is no specific Benchmark, however the programme has been developed in accordance with the Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and meets the requirements for Level 7. The programme also complies with Competence & Curriculum Framework (CCF) for the Physician Assistant (Department of Health (DH) 2006, Revised in 2012.
Assessment Regulations:	***Academic Assessment Regulations*, accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice)**
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	**Yes**
Ethics Sub-committee	**Yes**
Date Published / Updated:	**2020**

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

Please refer to the *Academic Qualifications Framework* for Exit Qualifications recognised by the University and credit and module requirements.

The programme will be offered with the final award of MSc Physician Associate. However, university regulations permit awards to be made at the following step off points:

Name of Exit Qualification:	**Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)**
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	Post Graduate Certificate in Clinical Sciences
Credits requirements:	**60 Credits at Level 7**
Module requirements:	Achievement of 60 credits at Level 7 leads to an award of Completion of the following module: CL743 - General and Adult Medicine as a Physician Associate: Theory and Practice. This would not allow entry to the Physician Associate National examination
Learning Outcome	
Demonstrate advanced skills in history taking, clinical examination and procedures to be able to continue learning in the clinical environment whilst adhering to recognised standards of safety for oneself and others.	

Critically review anatomy and physiology in relation to a systems based approach to clinical consultation, demonstrating a willingness to work co-operatively, and make appropriate onward referrals.
Critically evaluate clinical practice to identify individual learning needs to support continuing academic and professional development
Demonstrate a developing critical awareness of interpersonal skills to enable effective execution of various roles within a learning group and the professional environment, and to interact appropriately with patients and fellow health professions.
Practice in a legal, ethical and compassionate manner within their own scope of professional practice.

Name of Exit Qualification:	**Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)**
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	Post Graduate Diploma in Physician Associate
Credits requirements:	120 Credits at Level 7
Module requirements:	CL 743 General and Adult Medicine as a Physician Associate: Theory and Practice (60 credit) CL744 Specialist and Acute Medicine as a Physician Associate: Theory and Practice (60 credit) This would allow entry to the Physician Associate National examination.

Learning Outcome
Demonstrate a systematic understanding and critical awareness of current medical problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of professional practice.
Competently deal with complex medical issues, making sound clinical judgements in the absence of complete clinical data and communicating this effectively to the wider interdisciplinary team.
Utilise a broad science knowledge base, demonstrating a sound understanding of clinical and medical sciences, including pharmacology, therapeutics, public health and epidemiology, to underpin patient assessment, clinical decision making and clinical management of patients across the lifespan
Demonstrate original application of scientific knowledge, together with practical understanding of how established research techniques are used to create and interpret knowledge within the discipline of medicine.
Critically appraise and utilise the evidence base and exemplars of best practice to underpin clinical practice and for advanced scholarship, demonstrating originality in the application of knowledge to practice
Demonstrate professionalism, self-direction and originality in problem solving, planning and the execution of patient management plans.
Practice in a legal, ethical and compassionate manner within the scope of professional practice.
Conduct safe, appropriate and effective history taking, clinical examination, and consultation with patients across the lifespan and in a range of clinical settings.

Identify, request and, where appropriate, conduct clinical investigations, in a range of clinical presentations across the lifespan and in a range of clinical settings.