

Programme Specification for Postgraduate Programme Leading to: MSc Physician Associate

Applicable for all postgraduate students starting in **September 2022**

Version No.	Date	Notes – QA USE ONLY	QA
1	Dec-21	2022/23 version created with part-time entry suspended for a further 2 years (to be reintroduced from September 2024).	RJC

Postgraduate Taught Programme	
1. Awarding institution	Brunel University London
2. Teaching institution(s)	Brunel University London
3. Home college/department/division	College of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Department of Health Sciences, Division of Physiotherapy and Physician Associate
4. Contributing college/department/division/associated institution	N/A
5. Programme accredited by	N/A
6. Final award(s) and FHEQ Level of Award	MSc Physician Associate (FHEQ Level 7)
7. Programme title	Physician Associate
8. Programme type (single honours/joint)	N/A
9. Normal length of programme (in months) for each mode of study	24 months (FT)
10. Maximum period of registration for each mode of study	Normal or standard duration plus 2 years up to a maximum of 5 years.
11. Variation(s) to September start	None
12. Modes of study	Full-time
13. Modes of delivery	Standard
14. Intermediate awards and titles and FHEQ Level of Award	MSc in Health Sciences (FHEQ Level 7) Postgraduate Diploma Physician Associate (FHEQ Level 7) Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences (FHEQ Level 7) Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences (FHEQ Level 7)
15. UCAS Code	BB96
16. HECoS Code	100750 (Physician Associate Studies)
17. Route Code	5H5JPPHAS
18. Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external and internal reference points used to inform programme design	QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (there are currently no relevant subject benchmark statements.) QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Brunel 2030

	<p>Brunel Placement Learning Policy, as published under the 'Placements' section of the 'Managing Higher Education Provision with Others' page.</p> <p>Royal College of Physicians, Faculty of Physician Associates, Department of Health's Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Associate</p>
19. Admission Requirements	<p>Undergraduate Degree At least, a 2:1* in a Life/Health Sciences Degree (e.g., Anatomy, Biology, Biochemistry, Biomedical Science, Medical Science, Medical Engineering, Nursing, Operating Department Practice, Paramedic, Pharmacy, Physiology, etc.) or equivalent qualification is required.</p> <p>*Significant relevant work experience in healthcare or allied health professions may contribute to an application if the above requirements are not fully met.</p> <p>English Language Requirements IELTS – overall 7.5 with at least a 7.0 in Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking – or equivalent.</p> <p>International Qualifications Equivalent qualifications gained in other countries will be reviewed by the University's Admissions Office.</p> <p>Personal Statements: Two personal statements of no more than 500 words are required for both of the following statements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe your motivation to become a Physician Associate, detailing your experience, qualifications, and personal qualities as they pertain to becoming a member of the profession. 2. Discuss how the Physician Associate role might fit into the UK healthcare system. <p>References Two satisfactory references are required to support an application, both dated within the last year. One of these must be a recent academic reference and the other should be either a second academic reference or a professional/employer reference.</p> <p>Referees should know the applicant well enough, in an official capacity, to write about them and their suitability for higher education. The University does not accept references from family, friends, partners, ex-partners or the applicant.</p> <p>Health Screening Successful applicants will have a satisfactory health clearance and are required to undergo appropriate blood tests and immunisations against hepatitis B, MMR, meningitis, TB, and chicken pox.</p> <p>Disclosure and Barring Service Successful applicants are required to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (formerly a Criminal Records Bureau check).</p> <p>Professional Registration: Current healthcare professionals or members of a registered professional body will be asked to provide details of their registration. If an applicant has had their professional registration suspended or revoked, or undergone a disciplinary/fitness to practise investigation, they will be required to provide further information if selected for interview. Applicants may also be asked to provide full copies of related documentation.</p>

	<p>Meeting the minimum entry requirements does not guarantee an interview or a place on the programme.</p>
<p>20. Other relevant information (e.g. study abroad, additional information on placements)</p>	<p>Study Abroad Students may have an opportunity to spend some weeks in partner institutions in other countries such as the USA to undertake a clinical practice study block (subject to academic performance and College/ University approval). Students will be advised of this option at open/selection days and at the beginning of their studies.</p> <p>Clinical Education Students must complete at least 1,708 hours of clinical education experience in Years 1 & 2 in order to complete the programme. There are 35 one-day GP clinical placements in Year 1. In Year 2 there are six required clinical placements in Community Medicine (GP), 6 weeks, General Hospital Medicine, 12 weeks: Accident and Emergency, 6 weeks: Mental Health, 3 weeks: Obstetrics and Gynaecology, 3 weeks: Paediatrics, 3 weeks: General Surgery, 3 weeks. There will also be two 3-week Electives in areas where the student may require additional learning experiences or an area in which the student has a particular interest. These 42 weeks of clinical placements are an integral part of the Master's programme. Students' clinical practice experiences are undertaken in a variety of placement learning environments- primarily GP surgeries and NHS Secondary and Tertiary care hospitals, but may include community services and independent hospitals. The placements are organised by the programme team/administration working in collaboration with The Training Hub Hillingdon CIC, Secondary and Tertiary Care providers, CNWL and Health Education North West London. The majority of placements are within the London region.</p> <p>Consent Before students participate in practical and clinical teaching they must provide consent in line with the programme's consent procedure. Additionally, Physician Associate students ,who are at the beginning of their careers as health care providers, will agree to exhibit behaviours consistent with the Royal College of Physicians Faculty of Physician Associates' Guidelines and Fitness to Practice and Code of Conduct and Scope of Practice.</p> <p>Royal College of Physicians Faculty of Physician Associate Membership (RCPFPA) Student membership of the Royal College of Physicians Faculty of Physician Associates provides multiple resources that include discount prices for Royal College of Physician and Faculty of Physician Associate conferences, workshops, and events, online content, and regular updates from the Faculty. All students are required to fund their membership for the duration of the programme. Failure to become a member of the FPA may result in a student being withheld from clinical placements and ultimately withdrawn from the programme. See also <i>Professional Suitability</i> below.</p> <p>Immunisations In order to undertake clinical practice assessment placements students must have completed all relevant immunisations as requested by the clinical placement coordinator. Failure to complete the immunisations may result in the award of a fail in specific modules with clinical placement requirements. Continued failure to meet the requirement for immunisations may lead to the student being referred to the professional suitability panel which may ultimately withdraw the student from the programme.</p>
<p>21. Programme regulations not specified in Senate Regulation 3. Any departure from regulations specified in Senate Regulation 3 must be stated here and approved by Senate.</p>	<p>Programme credit volume The programme overall consists of 195 credits. 135 taught credits and a 60 credit Dissertation.</p> <p>Reassessment There will be reassessment opportunities at the end of each academic year. The maximum number of taught credits eligible for reassessment for the</p>

	<p>entire programme over the two years is 60 credits, as per Senate Regulation 3.</p> <p>Reassessment opportunities over the entire programme are as per Senate Regulation 3 except when a student fails one or more clinical placements (see next paragraph)</p> <p>Assessment of clinical practice placements In accordance with the aims and learning outcomes of the programme, to produce competent clinicians, failure of a clinical placement is viewed as a serious matter. Therefore, where a student fails more than one clinical placement assessment block at the first attempt within a year, they may be required to withdraw from the programme.</p> <p>All students are required to undertake specified periods of placement. Every attempt is made to match students' placement needs. Students may not unreasonably reject the offer of a placement setting nor are they permitted to unilaterally discontinue a placement setting once commenced. The University and the placement provider may terminate a placement setting only with good cause. Students who wish to discontinue a placement setting must gain the agreement of the University before they may discontinue the placement setting; relevant procedures are defined in the placement handbook.</p> <p>Where, after due process as defined in the relevant placement handbook, a student's progress in a placement setting is judged as irredeemable, the placement setting may be terminated early by the University and placement provider. An 'irredeemable' judgement will be made only where the student's progress in the placement setting is such that it will not be possible for the student to meet the requirements of the clinical placement within the remaining standard period of the current placement setting.</p> <p>Where a student's placement setting is terminated early, for whatever reason, the programme shall then review the circumstances leading to the early termination and report its findings to the appropriate individual or body. It may or may not be recommended that the student be found an alternative placement setting to complete the remaining placement period, according to the circumstances of the termination.</p> <p>Attendance requirements Since the awards of MSc Physician Associate and PGDip Physician Associate confer eligibility to undertake the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination, which is required to practice as a physician associate, the Physician Associate requires specific hours of nominal study time, attendance for University activities and placements which are essential to facilitate safe practice. Students are expected to attend at least 80% of the modular/study blocks and 100% of placement assessment/study blocks. Attendance will be monitored and students not achieving the minimum number of hours as set out in the relevant module outline may fail a module or the programme.</p> <p>Professional Suitability Certain behaviours may indicate that a student is professionally unsuitable. Where the professional suitability of a student is questioned the student will be considered under Senate Regulation 14.</p>
<p>22. Further information about the programme is available from the College website.</p>	<p>https://www.brunel.ac.uk/physician-associate</p>

23. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

On completion of the **MSc Physician Associate programme**, students will be expected to be able to integrate theoretical and clinical learning in order to demonstrate that they have met the educational requirements set out by the Royal College of Physicians Faculty of Physician Associates (RCP FPA) in the [Competence and Curriculum Framework \(2012\)](#)

1. Enable graduates to provide patients with safe, high quality, compassionate clinical care within their scope of practice and field of delegated autonomy.
2. Provide graduates with sound scientific knowledge to inform their clinical skills and decision-making.
3. Equip graduates to safely assess patients, demonstrate clinical reasoning and diagnostic skills, formulate a management plan, and execute the management plan.
4. Enable graduates to work effectively within an integrated multidisciplinary team and with delegated autonomy.
5. Equip graduates with transferrable skills and an understanding of first principles to provide them with the ability to adapt practice in order to function safely and effectively in a range of situations, many of which will be new or novel.
6. Prepare graduates to become leaders of their profession through self-management, role modelling, and education, and by contributing to the evolution of the Physician Associate profession in the UK.
7. Enable graduates to demonstrate the qualities and skills for employment.

24. PROGRAMME AND INTERMEDIATE LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding (K) cognitive (thinking) skills (C) and other skills and attributes (S) in the following areas:

FHEQ Level	Category (K = knowledge and understanding, C = cognitive (thinking) skills, S = other skills and attributes)	Learning Outcome	Masters Award Only	Associated Assessment Blocks Code(s)	Associated Study Blocks Code(s)	Associated Modular Blocks Code(s)
7						
	K	Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of fundamental medical sciences underpinning practice for Physician Associates				PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	K	Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of pathophysiology and clinical reasoning				PN5601 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	K	Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of pharmacology				PN5601 PN5600 PN5602 PN5616 PN5617

						PN5618 PN5619 PH5706 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PHcccc
	K	Demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of research methods				PN5604 PN5600 PN5602 PH5706 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PHcccc
	C	Apply theoretical knowledge to practise as a Physician Associate				PN5601 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	C	Analyse and evaluate evidence underpinning practice as a Physician Associate				PN5601 PH5609 PN5604 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	C	Use judgement to make decisions within a clinical environment				PN5601 PN5604 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603

						PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	C	Undertake self-directed work to achieve module and course outcomes and accept responsibility for own learning				PN5601 PN5604 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	C	Undertake continued professional development and up-dating to maintain currency of theoretical and practice knowledge				PN5601 PN5604 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PH5706 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PHcccc
	S	Formulate and document a detailed differential diagnosis, having taken a history and completed a physical examination				PN5601 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612

						PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Develop a comprehensive patient management plan in the light of the individual characteristics, background and circumstances of the patient				PN5601 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Maintain and deliver the clinical management of the patient on behalf of the supervising doctor				PN5601 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and prepare prescriptions for medications				PN5601 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Request and interpret diagnostic studies and undertake patient education, counselling and health promotion				PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612

						PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Use information technology competently to support academic and practical work				PN5604 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Communicate effectively with patients and members of the healthcare team				PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Produce written work of an appropriate standard				PN5604 PN5600 PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PH5706 PHcccc
	S	Manage time and set priorities within a pressurised environment				PN5602 PN5603 PN5606 PN5613 PN5614 PN5615 PN5616 PN5617 PN5618 PN5619 PN5620 PN5610 PN5611 PN5612 PH5706 PHcccc

Learning/teaching strategies and methods to enable learning outcomes to be achieved, including formative assessments

Fundamental to this programme is students who are self-directed learners who are facilitated by clinical academics to develop their practical and theoretical knowledge to prepare students for entry to the Physicians Associates Voluntary register.

A mixture of teaching / learning approaches are utilised to facilitate a balance between strategies that require students to present information to their peers, lectures supplemented by case-based discussions and learning, simulated practice learning, interactive quizzes and study sessions. All learning resources are available for students on the Blackboard learn site for each module. Primarily problem-based learning is used, where students are presented with a problem and helped to develop their own learning objectives and questions around the problem. They will draw upon and develop their anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology of health and disease, theoretical knowledge, pharmacology, clinical procedures and examinations, protocols / evidence-based guidelines and policies to create their answers to the problem. Subsequently they present their findings to their peers and engage in interactive discussion and debate facilitated by clinical academic staff.

Other learning strategies are peer-assisted learning, where students bring their previous or newly developed knowledge and understanding and share this with their colleagues giving and receiving feedback from each other. Each student has a unique range of experiences to bring to and contribute to their and their peers learning and it is important that these experiences are shared when appropriate with their peers. Throughout the programme students will use simulated practice learning to develop and consolidate their repertoire of clinical and procedural skills, this may incorporate low and medium fidelity simulation adjuncts and aims to simulate the reality of placement experiences students may have. This will be undertaken in a safe and supportive learning environment where mistakes can be made and rectified to enhance learning. Students will receive peer and academic feedback in these sessions.

Teaching will, range from sessions that impart knowledge, skills & understanding, to reflection and students critically analysing their own practice. Emphasis will be placed on active student participation and learning. This emphasis on active learning and the interaction between theory and practice respects the student as an adult learner and encourages independence.

Formative assessments will include single best answer / multiple choice questions (SBA / MCQ) papers and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), to begin early preparation for the National Examination which are in the same format. Other formative assessments will include written and oral presentations of projects proposals and formative submissions of reflections on practice and case studies, and a portfolio of evidence.

Summative assessment strategies and methods to enable learning outcomes to be demonstrated.

A variety of assessment strategies are used to ensure the knowledge and skills for the Physician Associate role are developed. These include unseen written SBA examinations and OSCEs to reflect the National Examination, essays, written reports on projects, critiques of evidence, a 6,000 word dissertation and presentation, seminar presentations, and a portfolio of evidence of core clinical skills and competencies.

At the end of the programme, all students will be required to undertake the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination that consists of a Single Best Answer (SBA) exam, Short Written Answers paper and Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). Students will not be eligible to undertake the National Examination unless they have successfully completed the assessments for all modules on their programme. Students are offered three attempts for both the theory and OSCE components of the National Examination.

25. Programme Structure, progression and award requirements

Programme structures and features: levels, assessment blocks, credit and progression and award requirements

- **Compulsory block:** one which all students registered for the award are required to take as part of their programme of study. These will be listed in the left-hand column;
- **Optional block:** one which students choose from an 'option range'. These will be listed in the right hand column;
- A **core assessment** is an assessment identified within an assessment block or modular block (either compulsory or optional) which must be passed (at grade C- or better) in order to be eligible to progress and to be eligible for the final award. All core assessments must be specified on the programme specification next to the appropriate assessment or modular block:

Where students are expected to pass the block at C- or better, but not necessarily all elements, then the

block itself is core.

e.g. AB5500 Project (40)

Core: Block

Where only some elements of assessments are required to be passed at C- or better, these will be identified by listing each element that is core

e.g. ABXXX1 Title (XX credits)

Core: 1 & 4

Where students are expected to pass all assessments in a block then this will be identified. By setting the assessment this way, students are also required to pass the block by default. This will be identified thus:

e.g. ABXXXX Title (XX credits)

Core: All, Block

- A **non-core assessment** does not have to be passed at grade C- or better, but must D- or better in order to be eligible for the final award.

FHEQ Level 7

Compulsory assessment block codes, titles and credit	Optional assessment block codes, titles and credits
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Compulsory study block codes, titles and credits	Optional study block codes, titles and credits
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Compulsory module block codes, titles and credit All blocks are Core	Optional modular block codes, titles and credits
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PN5602_CB Foundations of Clinical Medicine A (30 credits)
Core: Block (FT Y1)

PN5601_CB Applied Pharmacology (15 credits)
Core: Block (FT Y1)

PN5603_CB Personal and Professional Development A (30 credits)
Core: Block (FT Y1)

PN5604_CB Applied Research for Health & Social Care (15 credits)
Core: Block (FT Y1)

PN5605_CB Foundations in Clinical Medicine B (30 credits)
Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5606_CB Personal and Professional Development B (15 credits)
Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5610_CB PA Placement Year 1 - General Practice 1 (0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y1)

PN5611_CB PA Placement Year 1 - General Practice 2 (0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y1)

PN5612_CB PA Placement Year 1 - General Practice 3 (0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y1)

PN5613_CB PA Placement – Acute Medicine (0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5614_CB PA Placement – Accident and Emergency (0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5615_CB PA Placement – General Practice (0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5616_CB PA Placement – Surgery (0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5617_CB PA Placement – Obstetrics and Gynaecology
(0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5618_CB PA Placement – Mental Health
(0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5619_CB PA Placement – Paediatrics
(0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5620_CB PA Elective Placements
(0 credits) Core: Block (FT Y2)

PN5600_CA Dissertation Core: Block (60 credits)
Core: All (FT Y1 & 2)

FHEQ Level 7 Progression and Award Requirements

As per [Senate Regulation 3](#) with the following award-specific additions:

Continuation

Students must achieve at least a Grade C- in all Year 1 assessment and modular blocks in order to continue to Year 2.

MSc Physician Associate Award Requirements

For the award of MSc Physician Associate, students must achieve a minimum grade of C- in all assessment and modular blocks (195 credits), and pass all zero credit-rated placement blocks. Achievement of this award confers eligibility to undertake the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination, which is required to practise as a Physician Associate.

Intermediate Awards

MSc in Health Sciences

For the award of MSc Health Sciences, students must achieve a minimum grade profile as defined in SR3 over 180 credits of assessment (excluding all zero credit-rated placement blocks). For the award of MSc in Health Sciences, PN5605_CB and PN5606_CB are designated non-core. This award does not provide eligibility to sit for the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination which is required to practise as a Physician Associate.

Postgraduate Diploma Physician Associate

For the award of Postgraduate Diploma Physician Associate, students must achieve a minimum grade profile of C- in all assessment and modular blocks with the exception of PN5600_CA Dissertation and pass all zero credit-rated placement blocks. Achievement of this award confers eligibility to undertake the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination which is required to practice as a Physician Associate.

Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences

For the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences, students must achieve a minimum grade profile as defined in SR3 (excluding all 0 credit-rated placement blocks). For the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Health Sciences, PN5605_CB and PN5606_CB are designated non-core. This award does not provide eligibility to sit for the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination which is required to practise as a Physician Associate.

Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences

For the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences, students must achieve a minimum grade profile as defined in SR3 (excluding all zero credit-rated placement blocks). In progressing to Year 2 of the MSc, students will have already achieved the requirements for a postgraduate certificate. For the purposes of the award of Postgraduate Certificate in Health Sciences, the following blocks are designated non-core: PN5602_CB; PN5603_CB; PN5601_CB; HH5609. This award does not provide eligibility to sit for the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination which is required to practise as a Physician Associate.

Please note: this specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a 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 can be found in the modular block, assessment and study block outlines and other programme and block information. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University from time to time and whenever a modification occurs.