

Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught

For students starting in Academic Year 2024/25

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	PGDip Physician Associate Practice (Apprenticeship)
Award type	Postgraduate Diploma
Mode of study	Part-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Normal length of the programme	30 months
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	General Medical Council (GMC)
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS); Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)
Tuition Fees	<p>The employer pays all course fees and no fees are charged to apprentice students.</p> <p>Programme price is set at the maximum funding band for this apprenticeship standard set by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) which is a government non-departmental body sponsored by the Department for Education (DFE). We reserve the right to increase price in future. Fees will be paid by the employer on behalf of the apprentice using Levy or co-funding arrangements. For further information please visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-from-may-2017</p> <p>A full breakdown of costs is set out in the commitment statement.</p>

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

All Higher and Degree Apprenticeships combine higher education study and work-based learning to enable apprentices to achieve a higher-level award whilst in work. The provision of an academic award is integrated with experience, practice and learning in the workplace where the apprentice has paid employment status. Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are co-designed by training providers and employers to ensure that apprentices are

equipped with the skills employers need and to develop their own careers.

The Physician Associate apprenticeship programme will follow this structure in order to ensure completion of all areas of the Physician Associate apprenticeship standard, via a blended approach which will consist of learning within the university environment and also the workplace on the job.

Physician Associates are healthcare professionals who work alongside registered Doctors and provide medical care as an integral part of a wider healthcare team. They are *dependent* practitioners, which means that they must work with a dedicated medical supervisor, but are able to work autonomously with appropriate support. They can be found working in GP surgeries, Accident and Emergency departments, care homes and hospitals. Physician Associates are medically trained to provide all aspects of health care to patients, including: consultation, assessment, treatment and management of their health care needs. They can take medical histories, perform physical examinations, request and interpret investigations, diagnose and manage patients, and perform an extensive range of specialised procedural skills within their scope of practice.

Physician Associates' ability to practise medicine is enabled by collaboration and supportive working relationships with their medical supervisors, meaning that there is always a registered doctor who can discuss cases, give advice and attend to patients if necessary. In this way, Physician Associates increase the numbers of the medical workforce and increase access to quality care for patients. They act in an enabling role, helping to reduce the healthcare team's workload, and bring new talent to the NHS, adding to the skill mix within the teams. Physician Associates may work in specialist fields of medicine but always maintain their generalist knowledge and skills. They offer continuity and stability.

2. Overview of the Programme

This programme is used to deliver the apprenticeship standard for Physician Associates. Apprenticeship standards are co-designed by employers and training providers (Keele University in this case) to ensure that apprentices are equipped with the skills employers need. All Higher and Degree Apprenticeships combine work-based learning with part-time study leading to a recognised qualification. In this case a Post Graduate Diploma (PgDip) in Physician Associate Practice. The programme has been designed for delivery in a work-based learning context, where assessments for each module of the programme provide opportunities for you to apply the learning from the module back into the workplace context. The End Point Assessment (EPA), is the Physician Associate Registration Assessment (PARA), delivered by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). This will ensure maximum preparation for you to facilitate success at this high-stake examination to allow you to register with the General Medical Council (GMC) then practice as a Physician Associate.

During delivery we will work with you and your employer to ensure that you progress through your apprenticeship, as a job with training. This will involve regular tripartite review meetings, monitoring compliance with apprenticeship requirements, such as the 20% off the job training and identifying any changes required to your learning plan. Throughout your apprenticeship, you and your employer will have access to APTEM; our apprenticeships management system, where you will be required to sign and submit documents to demonstrate your progress and adhere to compliance requirements.

Achievement of the apprenticeship is through the End Point Assessment (EPA). Further details are provided in the section titled "How is the programme assessed". The EPA for this programme is non-integrated and will be the PARA run by the Royal College of Physicians. This is the same national examination as Physician Associates completing the traditional route of training. This is to ensure a national standard of performance in the Physician Associate profession to facilitate safe and quality care.

The Physician Associate apprenticeship programme will be delivered in blocks around the different body systems, professional and ethical concepts of the role, leadership and prescribing practice. Each block will have a mixture of resources available to you to complete in the university environment, on the job within the workplace and as self-directed or directed study.

In your programme you may sometimes be expected to role play and engage in simulated clinical scenarios with other students, such as the practice and observation of practical skills in physical contact with other students. For some specific practices, this may necessitate modification of dress - e.g., to shorts and t-shirt. These activities will be conducted in a professional, safe, respectful and culturally sensitive way, under the supervision of academic staff, according to a defined protocol.

3. Aims of the programme

The broad aims of the programme are to enable you to:

- Acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable you to become a Physician Associate.
- Effectively apply all of these to enable you to provide professional and ethical robust quality patient/client care.
- Work effectively within the realms of the PA professional responsibilities as part of a multidisciplinary team

(MDT) in any health care setting of the UK.

A Physician Associate (PA) can:

- Take medical histories from patients.
- Perform evidence based physical examinations on patients, for example listening to a patient's heart and lungs, i.e. heart and lung auscultation.
- Make clinical decisions based on patient centred assessments.
- Determine the direction of patient management and care.
- Formulate, implement and critically evaluate a patient management plan.
- Perform specialised diagnostic and therapeutic interventions, for example perform and interpret an electrocardiogram (ECG).
- Request and interpret specialised diagnostic studies for patients, for example requesting blood tests and interpreting the results.
- Build and sustain the clinician-patient relationship.
- Provide health promotion and disease prevention advice to patients.
- Develop and mentor other health care professionals (including other PAs in training).
- Produce records of clinical decision making and actions.
- Adhere to information governance requirements.

It is the above knowledge, skills and behaviours which you will develop over the course of the programme. These are also listed below in more detail.

4. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding.
- Subject specific skills.
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills).
- Professional behaviours and attitudes.

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Patient centred history taking and physical examination.
- Clinical decision making.
- Clinical planning, procedures and therapeutic interventions.
- The clinician-patient relationship.
- Learning and mentoring of your own and others' need.
- Record keeping and information governance.

These areas are broken down into smaller components around different clinical areas and concepts (see domains tables below taken from the apprenticeship standard).

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- Carry out clinical examinations of all body systems.
- Carry out procedural skills around the different body systems and areas of clinical medicine.
- Interpret clinical tests and investigations to focus patient care.

(see list below of skills taken from the apprenticeship standard)

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful apprentices will be able to:

- Work effectively within a multidisciplinary team.
- Display effective time management skills.
- Be excellent communicators in both verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Show respect, dignity and empathy to all.
- Consistently behave with integrity and sensitivity.
- Behave as an ambassador for the Physician Associate role, acting professionally at all times.
- Recognise work limits of competence and professional practice to ensure patient safety.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Professional values and behaviours

Values

Successful apprentices will;

- Be caring, compassionate, honest, conscientious and committed.
- Value people as individuals, and respect equality and diversity.
- Recognise the importance of people's rights in accordance with legislation, policies and procedures, and where necessary, provide appropriate challenge.

Behaviours and probity

Successful apprentices will;

- Consistently behave with integrity and sensitivity.
- Behave as an ambassador for the role, 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 medical practitioner.
- Maintain effective relationships with colleagues from other health and social care professions.
- Inform patients, carers and others of the nature of your clinical role.
- Contribute to the effectiveness of a clinical learning environment.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Physician Associate Apprenticeship Standard Knowledge, skills and behaviours (ST0518)

DOMAIN	YOU WILL BE ABLE TO	YOU WILL KNOW AND UNDERSTAND
Patient centred history taking and physical examination	<p>1.1 Perform specialised medically based assessments to inform the development of an individual medical management plan</p> <p>1.2 Design and deliver patient centred consultations which enable the patient and carers to express their concerns, expectations and understanding</p> <p>1.3 Take, and critically evaluate, a patient history relevant to the clinical situation and apply this insight to assessing complex interacting psychological and social factors</p> <p>1.4 Perform the full range of evidence based examinations and assessments tailored to the demands of the clinical situation</p>	<p>1.1 The critical principles, methods and requirements of a patient centred and medically based assessment</p> <p>1.2 The patient presentations specified in the Department of Health Matrix and Competency and Curriculum Framework (www.fparcp.co.uk)</p> <p>1.3 How to structure and conduct evidence based consultations to obtain patient concerns, expectations and understanding</p> <p>1.4 How to take a patient history and it's practical application to complex interacting psychological, physiological and social factors</p> <p>1.5 The range of evidence based examinations and assessments you are required to perform</p> <p>1.6 How to draw on a diverse range of knowledge and critical thinking in your decision-making to determine an individual medical management plan</p>

DOMAIN	YOU WILL BE ABLE TO	YOU WILL KNOW AND UNDERSTAND
Clinical decision making	<p>2.1 Interpret the findings from a patient centred consultation and assess the need for further investigation, patient management and referral</p> <p>2.2 Formulate a diagnosis based on complex objective and subjective data</p> <p>2.3 Apply specialised clinical decision making techniques to select a diagnosis based on the available insight</p> <p>2.4 Critically evaluate and justify clinical decisions in cases with complex needs that involve many interacting factors</p> <p>2.5 Consult with your dedicated medical supervisor to inform clinical decision making where required</p>	<p>2.1 The criticality of clinical decision making processes in order to safeguard the delivery of high quality care</p> <p>2.2 Critical analysis of complex findings from investigations and how to apply this specialised insight to deliver a high quality care outcome for the patient</p> <p>2.3 How to assess and determine follow-up investigations using specialised investigation criteria</p> <p>2.4 How to assess and determine the direction of patient management to address many interacting factors</p> <p>2.5 The relevant national and local guidelines to apply to the formulation and delivery of a justifiable diagnosis</p> <p>2.6 How, and when, to consult with your dedicated medical supervisor</p>
Clinical planning, procedures and therapeutic interventions	<p>3.1 Perform an extensive range of specialised procedural skills</p> <p>3.2 Perform specialised clinical procedures using knowledge of the complex indications, contraindications, complications and techniques</p> <p>3.3 Critically evaluate and assess changes in a patient's condition and adapt patient management strategies/treatment within a timeframe suitable to the changing conditions</p> <p>3.4 Determine and implement appropriate specialised therapeutic interventions and/or prescriptions using clinical decision making techniques and medical judgement</p> <p>3.5 Formulate and implement a management plan with the patient, carers and healthcare professionals that takes into account complex interacting factors</p>	<p>3.1 The range of specialised procedural skills and clinical procedures that you are required to perform</p> <p>3.2 The range of specialised therapeutic interventions relevant to your role</p> <p>3.3 The therapeutic and prescription medications used in the clinical setting (within medical delegation clauses)</p> <p>3.4 How to confidently and competently write prescriptions and apply British National Formulary (BNF) and local formularies</p> <p>3.5 Your responsibility for patient concordance for the proposed drug regime as prescribed by the supervising clinician</p> <p>3.6 How to critically evaluate and adapt patient management strategies/treatment in response to changing conditions</p> <p>3.7 The development and implementation of management plans that takes into account complex interacting factors</p>

DOMAIN	YOU WILL BE ABLE TO	YOU WILL KNOW AND UNDERSTAND
The clinician-patient relationship	<p>4.1 Build and sustain a clinician-patient relationship to foster informed patient choice and negotiated care decisions</p> <p>4.2 Communicate and engage effectively with all patients and carers regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, social class, disability etc</p> <p>4.3 Actively involve patients and carers in their care and support them in managing their own health, wellbeing and illness</p> <p>4.4 Provide health promotion and disease prevention advice to patients and carers</p> <p>4.5 Design, implement and critically evaluate specialised assessment and observation techniques, and apply medical judgement across the patients' life span</p> <p>4.6 Escalate matters to a senior doctor when a clinical situation is outside the boundaries of clinical competence for the role</p> <p>4.7 Manage the safety of patients, carers and other individuals through safeguarding and management of risk</p>	<p>4.1 Different theoretical and evidence based approaches to building and sustaining the clinician-patient relationship</p> <p>4.2 Informed patient choice and negotiated care decisions</p> <p>4.3 Specialised engagement and communication methods that support the clinician-patient relationship</p> <p>4.4 How to enable the patient to assess options and make choices within the context of many interacting factors</p> <p>4.5 The practical and conceptual delivery of patient education and health promotion relevant to the clinical condition and patient needs</p> <p>4.6 The specialised assessment, observation techniques and medical judgement that are required across the patients' life span</p> <p>4.7 How to apply national and local guidelines, and legal requirements relevant to your area of practice (including challenging and reporting poor practice)</p> <p>4.8 The guiding principles, evidence based practice and latest developments in the NHS (incl clinical governance) in relation to your area of practice</p> <p>4.9 The boundaries of clinical competence for the role and when to escalate for senior medical assistance</p> <p>4.10 Safeguarding and the management of risk</p>
Learning and mentoring	<p>5.1 Assess own learning needs and engage in self-directed learning to review and improve medical practice within the scope of the role</p> <p>5.2 Work collaboratively to evaluate and meet the learning and development needs of other health professionals</p> <p>5.3 Act as a role model and mentor</p>	<p>5.1 Your role, responsibility and motivation to manage your own learning; the range of tools and techniques that can be used to direct own learning, set goals and evaluate learning</p> <p>5.2 The application of teaching and learning theories and models</p> <p>5.3 How to evaluate and meet learning needs for health care</p>
Record keeping and information governance	<p>6.1 Produce clear, legible and contemporaneous records regarding patient consultations and all aspects of clinical and non-clinical work</p> <p>6.2 Complete patient records and justify the management plan and outcomes of the clinical decision making process(es)</p> <p>6.3 Adhere to all aspects of information governance requirements</p>	<p>6.1 Legal and organisational requirements for record keeping and information governance</p> <p>6.2 Your responsibility for producing clear, legible and contemporaneous records</p> <p>6.3 Your responsibility towards fulfilling and maintaining Information governance policy</p>

Examination and procedural skills across the full range of the medical model including for example:

- cardiovascular system
- neurological
- respiratory system
- gastrointestinal system
- musculoskeletal system
- eyes/ophthamology
- ENT
- female reproductive system
- renal and genitourinary system
- skin/dermatology
- diagnostics and therapeutics (according to the FPA Competence and Curriculum Framework and Matrix of Core Clinical Conditions) which will be superseded by the GMC national PA curriculum once regulation is complete.

The Keele Graduate Attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social and ethical awareness**. You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

5. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following:

1. Observation, supervised practice and assessment of skills - you will be supported in clinical practice by clinical supervisors and through tripartite review which will also include the Academic Mentor.
2. Web- based learning- using the Keele Learning Environment (KLE, Blackboard Ultra), Microsoft Teams and similar platforms. Module details, learning materials, synchronous and asynchronous activities will be hosted on these sites. We will also access NHS e-learning developed by NHS England for online modules and self-assessments, primarily around safe-guarding and prescribing safety.
3. Seminars and workshops- a series of face to face and online tutor/ group-led activities per study block with each module.
4. Group work/PBL and peer support- all study blocks in each of the modules will use focused groupwork and classroom discussion to inform learning, either face to face or online.
5. Directed study: time to develop a portfolio, and add breadth and depth to knowledge and practice skills.
6. In-situ skills and procedure training.
7. In-situ anatomy teaching sessions.
8. Short narrated videos with self-assessment quizzes to assess assimilation of knowledge and understanding.
9. Self-directed study areas.
10. Interprofessional teaching sessions based on clinical scenarios with undergraduate medical students and students on the traditional PA programme.

Apart from these formal activities, you are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any specific learning needs you may have, with Academic Mentors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis.

These learning and teaching methods enable you to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme in a variety of ways. Drawing on a range of learning styles and preferences, it will provide a flexible and adaptable learning and teaching approach to suit all needs and to encourage deep learning for purposeful development on which to also build future expansion of knowledge and skills post the programme for CPD.

6. Teaching Staff

On this programme you will have a range of teaching staff all with a health profession background or a clinical science background. The core programme team includes Physician Associates, Doctors and Advance Nurse Practitioners. All anatomy and physiology and pharmacology are taught by the medical science team within the School of Medicine. Sessions on specific disease conditions are often taught by clinicians with honorary contracts with the School of Medicine, from the appropriate clinical areas to provide up to date and specialist knowledge. All of the core teaching team from the School of Medicine have teaching qualifications and many also hold doctorates in their subject area and have fellowship status with Advanced HE.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. However, the professional standards will continue to be met, even if alternate methods of learning and teaching are utilised temporarily. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on apprentices is limited if such changes occur.

7. What is the structure of the programme?

The programme does not follow the usual university academic year and semesters. It runs over a full calendar year, to work towards achieving the final award. The programme is spread over 30 months, which allows for the completion of the required aspects of the PA apprenticeship award. This is split into 3 modules. Two of which run for 12 months and a further one which covers the final 6 months. Module 1/year 1 covers aspects of general medicine (cardiology, respiratory medicine, gastroenterology, renal and urology, neurology, endocrinology, MSK, ophthalmology, ENT and palliative care). Module 2/year 2 builds on this and focuses on the specialist areas of medicine (paediatrics, women's health, mental health, emergency medicine, haematology, infectious diseases and dermatology). Module 3 covers the final 6 months and covers professional and ethical aspects of the role, leadership and prescribing practice, thus pulling all topics together to ensure an holistic approach to patient care and team working within the health care environment and also ensuring that you are "prescribing ready" for future prescribing qualifications from the GMC once legislation is passed. "Prescribing ready" means that you will have been taught the pharmacology and pharmacotherapeutics, legal and professional concepts of prescribing and how to write a prescription. This knowledge base will mean that you will then be ready and prepared to train to take on the role of a prescribing health care professional once qualified.

Year	Compulsory	Optional	
		Min	Max
Level 7	120	0	0

Module Lists

Level 7

The modules for this programme are organised with their content and assessment strategy to build from the clinical reasoning and diagnosis and general medical conditions, to more specialised and complex patient presentations. You will build the development of the skills and knowledge associated with this in a systematic way to embed your learning and development effectively. The final module will cover topic areas related to your preparation to become a registered Physician Associate and also ensure that you are "prescribing ready", on which to then take up the post registration prescribing training which will be provided by the GMC once legislation is passed. The final module will have assessments which mirror that of the Physician Associate Registration Assessment (PARA), which is the EPA for your apprenticeship. Hence why they are quite large assessments. This prepares you for the reality of the EPA which you will then sit a few months following the final assessment at the university.

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Preparation for qualified practice	CLM-40180	15	Semester 1-2
Principles of general medicine	CLM-40176	60	Year 1
Principles of speciality medical practice	CLM-40178	45	Year 2

Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

Level 7

Subject Knowledge and Understanding	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
Patient centred history taking and physical examination	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178
Clinical decision making	Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178 Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176
Clinical planning, procedures and therapeutic interventions	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178 embedded by the prescribing and medicines management content of the final module (CLM 40180)
The clinician-patient relationship	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178
Learning and mentoring of your own and others need	Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180
Record keeping and information governance	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178

Subject Specific Skills	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
Carry out clinical examinations of all body systems	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178
Carry out procedural skills around the different body systems and areas of clinical medicine	Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178 Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176
Interpret clinical tests and investigations to focus patient care	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178

Key or Transferable Skills (graduate attributes)	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
Work effectively within a multidisciplinary team	Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180 Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178
Display effective time management skills	Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178 Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176
Be excellent communicators in both verbal and non-verbal communication	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178 Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180
Show respect, dignity and empathy to all	Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180 Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178
Consistently behave with integrity and sensitivity	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178
Behave as an ambassador for the physician associate role, acting professionally at all times	Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178 Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180 Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176
Recognise work limits of competence and professional practice to ensure patient safety	Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178 Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180
Maintain confidentiality at all times	Preparation for qualified practice - CLM-40180 Principles of general medicine - CLM-40176 Principles of speciality medical practice - CLM-40178

Three modules are proposed for this programme. One for year 1 and year 2 which will both be 12 months long and then a third module of 6 months to fulfil the remaining time of the apprenticeship duration and also fall in line when the PARA is held, which is the EPA.

Module 1/year 1: Principles of general medicine (12months) (60 credits) CLM-40176

Module 2/year 2: Principles of speciality practice (12 months) (45 credits) CLM-40178

Module 3: Preparation for qualified practice (6 months) (15 credits) CLM-40180

The PA apprenticeship programme has been developed at level 7, with 120 credits to achieve a Post Graduate Diploma in Physician Associate Practice. The credit ratings for the modules reflect the amount of content and required number of assessments to support that content, dictated by the GMC curriculum and apprenticeship occupational standard. It is also structured to build your knowledge and skills in a systematic approach to ensure effective learning and development.

The programme will align to the GMC curriculum, which the HEE apprenticeship standard mirrors. It also embeds the GMC's Promoting Excellence; standards for medical education and training (2016) and Outcomes Framework for MAPs (2022). Following the completion of the apprenticeship programme all apprentices will undergo the End Point Assessment (EPA), which will be the PA Registration Assessment (PARA) delivered by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), which the current regular programme also complete. This will be governed by the GMC to ensure the appropriate standard is reached by all PAs across the UK to practice.

The programme has a blended learning approach and will be structured in study blocks within each module. These will consist of blocks of theory followed by clinical blocks in which to embed learning and skills. The length of each study block will vary according to the content to be covered as outlined by the GMC curriculum and the PA apprenticeship occupational standard. There will be three modules as listed above. Due to the constraints of meeting the GMC requirements, the placement time will be more than the expected for credit rating of the modules. There is an expectation that a minimum number of hours are gained in several clinical areas to achieve

competence which may amount to 1,400 hours over the whole programme (as a general guide based on the current PA programme which runs at Keele). There is also a large curriculum content to meet in terms of knowledge and skills. Although time spent in theory is higher during module 1, this develops the students' knowledge and skills to be effective members of the MDT in their clinical areas from early on in the programme. Over the whole apprenticeship programme this alters to less theory time during module 2 and module 3, so that overall, the theory time makes up around 20-25% of the apprenticeship programme. There will be elements of learning to be completed within the clinical areas (on the job learning), and a reflective professional portfolio in which to evidence this learning and development in various formats.

Together the modules cover the knowledge, skills and behaviours as set out in the apprenticeship standard which are broad objectives (as detailed previously). The modules break these down into smaller more specific outcomes for the various areas of professional practice.

8. Final and intermediate awards

Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Practice	120 credits	You will require at least 90 credits at Level 7
Postgraduate Certificate in Health Science	60 credits	You will require at least 40 credits at Level 7

The final award for this programme is a PGDip in Physician Associate Practice.

The interim award which you will receive if you leave the course at the end of year 1 after completing module 1, amounting to 60 credits at level 7, will be a PGCert in Health Science.

By committing to an apprenticeship, you are committing to work towards achieving the final award of the programme as given above.

The non-integrated EPA will be the PARA (Physician Associate Registration Assessment), which will be governed by the GMC once they have taken over professional regulation, and delivered by the RCP. Until then it is governed by the FPA (Faculty of Physicians Associates) and delivered by the RCP. It is the same national exam that all PA students complete to gain their professional status which enables them to practice as a PA in the UK, and provides standardisation of the level of practice in all PAs across the UK for the benefit of quality patient care and outcomes.

The award of PgDip awarded by the university is separate from the PARA and has to be achieved prior to applying to undertake the PARA.

9. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and help you to improve your performance.

The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

- Single best answer (SBA)/multiple choice knowledge exams
- OSCE practical exams
- Mini Cex assessments carried out in the clinical areas to assess your knowledge, skills and behaviours in aspects of patient care
- Written reflections around case presentations and patient care scenarios

The final EPA takes the form of an SBA exam and OSCE exam. The examinations during the apprenticeship programme mirrors these to ensure adequate student preparation for this national qualifying examination. This is the current format of the traditional PA programme and has proven highly successful in the preparation of students.

End Point Assessment: as well as containing in-programme training and assessment, the apprenticeship has an End Point Assessment (EPA). All apprentices must undertake this independent assessment, which is described above, and which is a synoptic assessment of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been learnt through the apprenticeship. The purpose of this assessment is to make sure that you, the apprentice, meet the standard set by employers and professional bodies and are fully competent in the occupation of being a Physician Associate. It is taken by apprentices at the very end of the programme phase of training when your employer and the training provider/university are satisfied that you have met all "gateway" criteria. The university will confirm at an Award Board which students have met these criteria, which will encompass passing all assessed elements of the programme.

All SBA examination questions and OSCE stations used to assess you, whether formatively or summatively, are set to national standard, which is the standard that you will encounter at the EPA. Your final SBA and OSCE exams of the programme, will be the same structure as the EPA in terms of number of SBA exam questions and also number of OSCE stations. This is to ensure you are prepared fully to undertake this EPA, which is also the RCP PARA (Physician Associate Regulation Assessment). The exact number of SBA questions and OSCE stations is determined by the RCP. Academic tutors on the Apprentice programme also act as examiners for this EPA exam, so bring their experience of the standard required back to embed this within the programme.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within four working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

10. Accreditation

This programme is accredited by the General Medical Council (GMC) once they take over professional regulation.

11. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

12. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?

Under UK Government rules, apprentices must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week and must have the right to live and work in the UK (applies only in England). An apprentice cannot be self-employed. The employer must enter into an Apprenticeship Agreement with the apprenticeship student. All candidates must be employed in a role related to the subject matter of the apprenticeship and be sponsored by their employer. Applications can only be made through the sponsoring employer. The University will consider all such applications and will have the final decision whether to accept the candidate for entry to the programme.

The recommended minimum entry requirements for Level 7 entry to the programme are:

- 2:1 classification in a science or health care related degree
- English and Maths at Level 5/6 (B) GCSE.

We normally require applicants to evidence the above qualifications before starting the apprenticeship.

Applications are welcomed from those with qualifications equivalent to the above. Relevant or prior experience will be taken into account when considering a candidate's suitability for the programme.

At application you are required to undertake a 'Skills Scan' where you are asked to self-assess against the knowledge, skills and behaviour of the apprenticeships standard. You are also asked if you want to make an application for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) through the University procedure. There is a requirement for new knowledge and skills to be developed through apprenticeships, with a minimum duration of one year.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidance can be found here: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/>

See the relevant course page on the website for the admission requirements relevant to this programme: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/>

13. How are students supported on the programme?

At your workplace, you will be supported by your employer. Exact arrangements and terminology are the responsibility of the employer but typically, you will have a named contact person who manages the relationship between the programme and the employer. The University and the employer are bound by contract to work together to support you as an apprentice. This will include 3-4 tripartite review meetings between the University, the apprentice, and the employer each year.

If your employment circumstances change whilst you are on the programme; support can be accessed from the University's Careers and Employability Service.

For the University sections of your programme you will be supported by:

- Access to student services which includes student welfare and occupational health.
- Allocation of an academic mentor.
- Allocation of a clinical supervisor.
- You will have a course handbook and handbooks for each of the modules to provide you with all the relevant information for your development and progress.
- Disability Inclusion Tutor attached to the programme.

14. Learning Resources

All apprentices have access to the main Keele University campus library and to the Health Library at the Clinical Education Centre (CEC) at Royal Stoke University Hospital. In addition, the modules have key reading materials on Keele's Virtual Learning Environment (the KLE). Each module has a prescribed and a recommended reading list.

The non-clinical components of the programme are based in the School of Medicine building on Keele campus. This is a very spacious, light and airy building, and includes a large lecture theatre, seminar rooms, IT laboratory and refreshment areas. Additionally, there is an anatomy suite comprising a large dissecting room and a resource room where exhibits are displayed to facilitate study. Although most of the material is anatomical, resources for other disciplines such as pathology are included. There are dissected specimens (prosections), models, bones, microscopes with histology slides, pathology pots, posters and CAL (computer aided learning) material. Groups of networked PCs are available throughout the University. However, the largest groups of open-access PCs are available in the Library Building. Most of these will be found in the IT Suite on the first floor. The computing facilities currently comprise a laboratory containing PCs with monochrome printers and scanners. Colour printing may be directed to the library building machines and collected from there. The suite is networked and has full access to the Internet. In addition, there is a computer in each of the seminar rooms in the building, and computers in the Anatomy Suite Resource room and the Multi-user lab. All students have individual e-mail accounts and a small amount of private file space on the University fileserver.

The programme is also delivered in the Clinical Education Centre, within the Royal Stoke University Hospital. The seminar rooms, extensive clinical skills laboratories, interprofessional Health Library and IT laboratories, provide state of the art teaching facilities, to allow and encourage multi-disciplinary learning and team working. This multi professional approach is seen as key to developing the workforce of the NHS. At the Clinical Education Centre, the clinical skills laboratories have recently been upgraded and extended to provide superb facilities including resuscitation and paediatric areas, intermediate and advanced skills laboratories, and allow the use of Sim Man training. In the IT Suite on the ground floor, adjacent to the Health Library, there are computers for student use, together with scanners and printers. The Library itself has photocopying facilities and 5 computers in a central area.

Keele's Library services, which operate from two sites, support student learning by providing:

- Copies of print textbooks and a growing collection of e-books.
- Access to course readings via online reading lists.
- Access to online journals and databases via the Library website.
- Off-campus access to the majority of e-resources.
- Inter-Library Loans services.
- Training sessions/inductions.
- Enquiries services (including 'Live Chat' Service).
- Online and printed material, e.g. 'eTutorials', floor plans.

Keele University Library (Keele Campus) and the Health Library (Clinical Education, Royal Stoke University Hospital) both contain printed textbooks and journals. Access to key journal titles such as BMJ, New England Journal of Medicine and The Lancet is available plus many more.

To search for books (includes eBooks and printed journals in Keele's Libraries use the Library's Discovery Service (covers both sites):

To search for e-journals use the E- Journals A-Z link on the Library Homepage Catalogue:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/library/>

To access relevant databases use the Library website (Subject Resources):

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/library/find/subject/medicine/>

You can borrow books for two weeks, one week or three days (Short Loan), and they will be renewed automatically on a rolling basis unless requested by another borrower.

Keele University Campus Library.

Campus Library is open all year round with 24/7 access during semesters. The building accommodates Library, Careers & Employability and Student IT Support (IT Connect). The Library supports courses taught at the Keele

Campus and overlooks Union Square - where the Students' Union is located. You will find copies of texts on your reading lists either online (as "e-books") or available for loan. A limited number of copies of some core texts may also be found in the Short Loan collection on the Middle Floor, CDs and DVDs are also available to use/borrow in the Library. The building contains in the region of 500,000 books at the time of writing. The Library also provides 300,000 e-books and over 20,000 e-journals to Keele students.

Printed journals are kept on the Ground Floor; current issues of titles are displayed separately.

The Library also offers the following services:

- Website (via Library Services page).
- Printed and online guides.
- Self-service points to issue and return books.
- Group Study Rooms. You can book one to work in a group (via the Main Service Counter) - the rooms are on the Middle & Top Floors.
- Enquiries service.
- Self-service photocopiers.
- Group study areas (Middle Floor) and Silent Study areas (Ground & Top Floors).
- Out-of-hours book return box.
- Access to IT Suite & IT Labs.
- Sale of stationery items.

Via the Medicine Subject Resources link on the Library website you will find links to some freely-available resources such as the Cochrane Library along with resources purchased to support your studies: health-related databases are also listed on these pages and include (at the time of writing):

MEDLINE and other core health databases (AMED, BNI, CINAHL, PsycINFO, SPORTDiscus), Web of Science and more. Access to an online learning package called Aclands Anatomy is also available.

For more details, visit <http://www.keele.ac.uk/library/find/subject/medicine>

Health Library

The Library is located on the Ground Floor of the Clinical Education Centre, Royal Stoke University Hospital, and (University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust). It is open all year round for extensive hours, seven days a week. It is open to all members of Keele University and local NHS practitioners. It contains printed books and journals.

Services include:

- Access to IT Suite.
- Self-service photocopying and printing (use your Keele Card).
- Silent Study Room.
- Thermal binding and laminating service.
- Sale of stationery items/USB sticks.
- Out-of-hours book return box.

The Health Library contains in the region of 34,000 books and 200 printed journals (for reference only) purchased by Keele and the NHS, in addition to collections of DVDs.

The majority of the resources required for the programme linked to the timetables session are on the KLE and arranged in the study blocks for ease of reference.

15. Other Learning Opportunities

The tripartite process may identify additional opportunities for development which will be discussed as part of the tripartite review meetings.

There will also be some taught session whilst in the university which will be run in collaboration with the UG medical programme for interprofessional learning and development.

You are encouraged to join the Faculty of Physician Associates at the Royal College of Physicians (FPARCP) as student members. Allowing you to access a range of educational opportunities such as the annual FPARCP student conference.

16. Additional Costs

Tuition fees are paid by your employer but you may incur costs not covered by the mandatory components of the apprenticeship e.g. library fines, print costs and costs associated with graduation.

In common with other Medical Schools, you should be aware that there are additional costs involved, such as the

purchase of books, a stethoscope and travel to placements. We do not usually recommend that you purchase books or equipment before starting the course as advice will be given at registration and during the programme as to what is required. If you intend to bring a car to Campus you should note that student car parking is limited and there is a charge for student permits, currently £100.

Activity	Estimated Cost
Parking permit for campus	£100
Good quality stethoscope	£80-100

These costs have been forecast by the University as accurately as possible but may be subject to change as a result of factors outside of our control (for example, increase in costs for external services). Forecast costs are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain representative. Where additional costs are in direct control of the University we will ensure increases do not exceed 5%.

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

17. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The School Education Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.
- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.
- The GMC will also review the programme annually alongside the MSc Physician Associate programme.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Board as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students on the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions.
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree.
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures.

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

18. The principles of programme design

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in the following documents:

1. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>
2. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>
3. General Medical Council. (2013). *Good medical practice*. London: GMC.
4. General Medical Council. (2016). *Achieving good medical practice*. London: GMC.
5. General Medical Council. (2016). *Promoting Excellence; standards for medical education and training*. London: GMC.

6. Royal College of Physicians. (2015). *The Standing Orders of the Faculty of Physician Associates*. London: RCP.

Link to the PA apprenticeship standard can be found here:

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/physician-associate-degree-v1-0>

link to the End Point assessment can be found here:

https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/3438/st0518_physician-associate_l7_ap-for-publication_05092019.pdf

The principles behind the design of this programme are to produce quality and professionally responsible Physician Associates, who will work within the multidisciplinary team in any health care setting, to ensure quality patient care and outcomes. Competence and safety are the central principles hence why this programme builds through the modules and clinical experience required, to ensure this is reached in a systematic and effective format.

19. Annex - Programme-specific regulations

Programme Regulations: PGDip Physician Associate Practice (apprenticeship)

Final Award and Award Titles	PGDip Physician Associate Practice (apprenticeship)
Intermediate Award(s)	PGCert Health Science
Last modified	January 2024
Programme Specification	https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmespecifications

The University's Academic Regulations which can be found on the Keele University website (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/>)[1] apply to and regulate the programme, other than in instances where the specific programme regulations listed below over-ride them. These programme regulations list:

- *Exemptions* which are characterised by the omission of the relevant regulation.
- *Variations* which are characterised by the replacement of part of the regulation with alternative wording.
- *Additional Requirements* which set out what additional rules that apply to students in relation to this programme.

The following **exemptions, variations** and **additional requirements** to the University regulations have been checked by Academic Services and have been approved by the Faculty Education Committee.

A) EXEMPTIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where an exemption from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

For the whole duration of their studies, students on this Programme are exempt from the following regulations:

No exemptions apply.

B) VARIATIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where a variation from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

Variation 1: Requirement to pass all assessments

As this is a professional programme, all assessment have to be passed in order to pass the modules overall. Students must display competence and adequate levels of knowledge to be safe practitioners.

Variation 2: No compensational component between assessments

As this is a professional programme, all assessments have to be passed at a suitable level, hence no compensation can be applied.

Variation 3: Requirement for capped assessments

As this is a professional programme, all assessments (components) are capped at assessment; if one assessment within a module is failed, only the failed component is capped at 50% on successful resubmission/retake.

Additional Requirements

The programme requirements listed below are in addition to the University's Academic Regulations:

Additional requirement 1:

Due to the professional nature of this programme, apprentices are expected to fully engage with the programme. They are required to attend all sessions timetabled in the taught element of the programme, to ensure they have the knowledge to embed into their clinical practice. Absences are to be reported for any session missed and any excessive loss of theory time could result in a referral to Health and Conduct Committee ran within the School of Medicine.

Apprentices are also expected to be proactive in organising their tripartite meetings.

All the above falls within professional responsibilities and duties for the career to which they are training for.

Additional requirement 2:

Apprentices are required to behave in accordance with the guidance offered in the GMC guide to Good Medical Practice (2022) and to conform to the appropriate dress code as set out by their employers.

Any apprentice who has a medical, physical or psychiatric condition, that may in the opinion of Occupational Health Department, prejudice their ability to perform their duties safely and competently, may be required to leave the programme.

Any apprentice found to have undisclosed criminal conviction, caution, warning or reprimand may be required to leave the programme.

All apprentices must comply with programme requirements for immunization.

Any apprentice that demonstrates unprofessional/dangerous/unsafe behaviour in the clinical environment will be withdrawn from the clinical area immediately and their conduct subject to a joint investigation by the School and the employer. Behaviour which is in breach of regulations may result in the apprentice being withdrawn from the programme.

During any clinical work, apprentices are expected to conform to policies and procedures laid down by the organisation that provides that clinical experience.

Additional requirement 3:

Student Additional Placement Requirement

An additional placement requirement may be required where you

- Fail your PSRB capabilities in a planned placement and an additional placement is required to support your regulatory standard attainment
- are outstanding skills and capabilities to support your programme progression.
- are outstanding your required PSRB capabilities to support professional registration.
- are outstanding PSRB work based practice days to support your course completion and professional registration. (N.B. this list is not exhaustive)

The following guidance applies to any circumstances where an additional placement is required.

Work Based Placement Provision

Work based placements are provided by Local Authorities, NHS Trust and Private Voluntary and/or Independent Organisations (PVIO) for programmes in FMHS. All Local Authorities, NHS Trust/organisation providers manage and coordinate their own work based student placements for all learners. This is done through liaison with the university.

Work Based Placement Pathway

Each university has a planned work based placement pathway for every student cohort group completing PSRB training and education programmes. This is to ensure that you meet all the professional practice capabilities and requirements for your programme of study. The planned work based placement pathway is agreed with the university.

Additional Work Based Placements

Should you need an additional work based placement, outside of the agreed placement pathway, the university would need to liaise closely with the educational team for the relevant Local Authority, NHS Trust/PVIO organisation provider. An additional placement request would need to be made.

Additional Work Based Placement Considerations

The ability to accommodate you with an additional placement outside of the normal placement pathway, is dependent upon several variables. For example, the number of mentors, practice assessors/educators, available in placement areas to support your learning and assessment and the numbers of student learners already situated in planned placements from other cohort groups and or other universities. The above factors sit mostly outside of the university's sphere of control.

Additional Work Based Placement Requests

If you require an additional work based placement, this will be requested and managed by the School's Placement Team (at the point at which the team are informed that additional placements for students are required and numbers are known). For social work courses, these placements are located by the placement coordinator, and in counselling by you with quality assurance checks undertaken by the relevant academic staff member

Additional Work Based Placements Timings

There may be times when it is not possible to secure an additional placement at the point at which you require an additional placement, and some organisations may not be able to offer any additional placements for you outside of the university agreed plans. You may therefore need to wait until a suitable placement opportunity becomes available within a Local Authority, NHS or PVIO provider organisation and the organisation is able to accommodate your additional placement request.

Additional Work Based Placement Progression Delay

Additional placement opportunities may not occur for you again until the next cohort group undertakes the equivalent placement experience in the next academic year. The need for any additional placements may lead to a delay which may affect your ability to continue to progress on programme with your cohort group.

Additional Work Based Placement Travel and Accommodation

Your school will make every effort to secure you an additional placement, however, this may mean that you will be expected to make informed decisions and take responsibility about travel, accommodation, and financial subsistence when the additional placement area secured is not within the normal placement pathway. The decision you will need to make will be between continuing with your current cohort group or delaying your progression on programme.

Programme Progression

Where your programme progression or course completion end date is impacted, it is important for you to seek advice and guidance from your programme specific Academic Mentor or Student Support Services, and if applicable your School International Director. Delays in your progression may have consequences for your professional registration and employment/financial/accommodation offers, visas, and or other contractual arrangements.

[1] References to University Regulations in this document apply to the content of the University's Regulatory Framework as set out on the University website here <https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/>.

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 10 June 2024

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2023/24	ALISON POOLER	18 April 2023	