Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

1	**Programme Title**	MMedSci Physician Associate Studies
2	**Programme Code**	MEDT50
3	**JACS Code**	B960
4	**Level of Study**	Postgraduate
5a	**Final Qualification**	MMedSci
5b	**QAA FHEQ Level**	7
6a	**Intermediate Qualification(s)**	PGCert Clinical Sciences
6b	**QAA FHEQ Level**	7
7	**Teaching Institution** (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	**Faculty**	Medicine, Dentistry and Health
9	**Department**	School of Medicine
10	**Other Departments involved in teaching the programme**	School of Health and Related Research
11	**Mode(s) of Attendance**	Full-time
12	**Duration of the Programme**	2 years
13	**Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body**	At present no national accrediting body exists, however the Faculty of Physician Associates at the Royal College of Physicians was founded in July 2015 with the expectation they will become accrediting body – currently a voluntary register exists
14	**Date of production/revision**	June 2018

15. Background to the programme and subject area

Physicians Associates (PAs) are a developing group of health professionals within the National Health Service who see patients and address their health needs whilst working under the supervision of Doctors. Qualified PAs have direct contact with patients in their assessment: taking histories, performing examination, making diagnoses and considering management plans. Evaluation of this new role shows that PAs are making an increasing contribution to high quality health care in teams across the UK and the profession is now supported by the new Faculty of Physicians Associates (see below).

Students will acquire the knowledge and skills required to support diagnosis and management primarily in adult general medicine, but also working with children, mental health, general surgery, women's health and in an emergency care setting. The Sheffield course is designed to provide its graduates with a firm grounding in the principles of generalist medical care to equip them to support doctors in 'first contact' health care, either in general practices or in hospitals.

In developing this masters course, the University aims to support the NHS workforce in the region. It is therefore working closely with both Acute Trusts (Hospitals) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (Primary Care) in the region so that graduates have the right qualities to meet the needs of potential employers and the public as a whole. We are also working with other universities to promote and support the development of this new role within local health services.

16. Programme aims

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

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1	At certificate level students will demonstrate in depth knowledge of the normal structure and function of the following body systems (Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry) 1. Cardiovascular and Respiratory. 2. Gastrointestinal (including Liver). 3. Musculoskeletal and Peripheral Nervous System (including Skin). 4. Endocrine, Metabolic and Blood systems.
K2	Demonstrate in depth understanding of how societal and epidemiological factors (public health) affect health across, and within defined populations including an appreciation of the effects of deprivation, disability and ethnicity.
In addition Diploma level candidates are expected to:	
K3	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how disturbances in the normal structure and function of the systems outlined in K1 and K2 contribute to the development of health problems related to the core conditions outlined in the Matrix Specification of Core Clinical Conditions for the Physician Associate, including a basic understanding of immunology, microbiology and histology.
K4	Have an understanding of basic theory of health education and methods of health information technology that can be used both to promote health and manage individual health problems.
K5	Demonstrate knowledge of the normal structure, patterns and functions in the following areas: 1. Sexual health and reproduction. 2. Development, growth and ageing of children and young people.
In addition at Masters level candidates are expected to demonstrate:	
K6	Application of critical and evaluative problem solving approaches in theory and practice.
K7	Critical and evaluative knowledge of the application of research methods.
K8	Critical and evaluative knowledge of the application of service improvement.

Clinical Skills and competencies:	
Please refer to the Physician Associate Competence and Curriculum Framework available at Faculty of Physician Associates website here.	
S1	**History taking and consultation skills -** Students will be able to take a full patient history appropriate to the clinical situation, including any relevant psychological and social factors and structuring their interview so that patients (or carers) are encouraged to express their concerns, expectations and understanding of their condition.
S2	**Examination Skills (general) -** Student will be able to perform clinical examinations tailored to the needs of the patient and the demands of the clinical situation, including all of neurological, musculoskeletal, mental state, male and female uro-genital, breast, ophthalmic, oro-pharyngeal, cardiovascular, respiratory, abdominal, and dermatological examinations.

S3	**Specific procedural skills -** Students will be able to perform and interpret routine first line investigative and therapeutic procedures in general medicine associated with the main body systems outlined in K1 and K2 e.g. ECG, Lung Function tests, Urinary Catheterisation. A full list of the core procedural skills is described in the Physician Associate Competence and Curriculum framework
S4	Students will be able to critically reflect on their own practice, identify learning needs and recognise the importance of keeping up to date with clinical practice and lifelong learning.
S5	Students will be able to work effectively in a team and have effective personal time-management skills.
In addition at Diploma level	
S6	Students will demonstrate the ability to perform a holistic assessment, define clinical problems, formulate differential diagnoses and to identify when information/data is incomplete and further evaluation is required.
S7	Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret the findings from history and examination and identify the need for additional investigations appropriately.
S8	Students will demonstrate the ability to formulate and implement appropriate management plans in collaboration with the patient, carers and other health professionals, recognising the relevance of age and social circumstances and the requirement for referral when necessary.
S9	Students will be able to demonstrate how to determine and propose appropriate therapeutic plans within scope of PA role, including medication whilst working under medical delegation clauses.
S10	Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to write accurate and legible prescriptions for primary and secondary setting for signature by supervising clinician.
S11	Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to interpret results (including screening) and identify potential follow up investigations within the PA role – please refer to Physicians Associate Conditions Matrix
S12	Students will be able to show their ability to develop and maintain clinical practice that fosters an ongoing therapeutic relationship, informed choice, shared decision-making and patient / carer involvement.
S13	Students will be able to recognise serious illness and respond appropriately including when monitoring patient's condition and response to treatment in acute settings.
S14	Students will demonstrate an understanding of how uncertainty is unavoidable in clinical practice and the ability to employ cognitive and practical strategies to manage uncertainty when it arises.
S15	Students will be able to maintain accurate contemporaneous and relevant records both within own practice and within teams.
S16	Students will demonstrate effective multi-agency working and identify when to share information in a timely manner in line with legal and ethical requirements.
S17	Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to teach effectively.
S18	Students will demonstrate the ability to recognise gaps in service provision (service evaluation) and contribute to service development where required.
S19	Students will be able to recognise situations of potential risk, either clinically or to people and take actions to eliminate/minimise immediate and future dangers, including moving and handling procedures.
In addition at Masters level:	
S20	The ability to prepare a research proposal as a basis for the work required to produce a Masters level dissertation.

Professional behaviours:	
The postgraduate diploma in PA studies is a vocational qualification preparing students for professional registration and work as health professionals within the NHS and abroad after graduation. As such, at the end of the course students will be required to demonstrate the following professional behaviours:	
B1	Behave with integrity and sensitivity and act as an ambassador for the role of a Physician Associate.
B2	Inform patients and others about the nature of the PA role as and when necessary.
B3	Value the roles of team members within health and social care, maintain relationships and communicate effectively.

B4	Recognise the importance of responding to complaints appropriately and in a timely manner.
B5	Recognise and demonstrate the importance of the legal and ethical principles underpinning equality and diversity.
B6	Recognise and uphold legal and ethical behaviours (autonomy, confidentiality, consent) and minimise the risk of harm, litigation or risk.
In addition at Diploma level:	
B7	Recognise the limits of clinical competence/scope of practice with their supervising clinician.
B8	Recognise the importance of shared decision-making and developing a therapeutic relationship, taking actions to promote concordance in treatments offered during practice.
B9	Be aware of the importance of 'interface' communication between teams and take action to maximise handover of information to streamline care.
B10	Demonstrate the importance of clinical governance (including Audit and Significant Event Recording) participating when appropriate (including their own work) and promote a learning environment.
B11	Be aware of the safeguarding procedures for vulnerable adults, children and families and take action when issues arise, including sharing information in a timely manner.
B12	Recognise the economic constraints to the NHS and seek to minimise waste of resources.
B13	Uphold the principles of the National Health Service.
In addition at Masters level:	
B14	Demonstrate the ability to organize and manage their own time and work.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

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

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

A range of assessment approaches, based on best practice within medical education, will be used to assess knowledge and skills across the programme. As with the integrated approach to teaching knowledge, skills and behaviours, a number of assessments will also be integrated.

The table on page 11 presents an overview of the teaching and assessment approach for each of the learning outcomes.

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

The learning outcomes are carefully matched to the most appropriate method of assessment. The assessment is blueprinted across each of the modules to ensure that each of the learning outcomes is appropriately assessed and across not only each of the modules but also the programme overall. The medical and health sciences modules will be assessed through SBA and EMQ based papers. Clinical skills will be assessed through a mastery approach; students are required to successfully achieve the learning outcomes in order to progress.

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

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

In addition to the aforementioned summative approaches, there will be a number of formative assessments during the small group ILA sessions.

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

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Competence and Curriculum Framework for the Physician Assistant 2012 (Faculty of Physician Associates)

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The Teaching and Learning Strategy of the University of Sheffield

The Mission Statement of the University of Sheffield

Information and feedback from the Course Steering Group, PGDip PA studies course leads from other medical schools, Health Education Yorkshire and the Humber PA Steering Group, other Stakeholders in Hospital Trusts CCGs and Primary Care.

20. Programme structure and regulations

Provide an overview of the structure of the programme

All students complete four modules in stage one:

MDE 601 Medical and Health Sciences (20 credits)

MDE 602 Preparation for Clinical Practice (15 credits)

MDE 603 Professional Practice 1 (20 credits)

MDE 604 Workplace Based Learning (15 credits)

In stage two, students complete four modules:

MDE 605 Medical and Health Sciences 2 (20 credits)

MDE 606 Professional Practice 2 (30 credits)

MDE 607 Workplace Based Learning 2 (30 credits)

MDE *** Development of Clinical Practice (30 credits)

All students have to successfully complete all four modules in stage 1 in order to progress into stage 2.

Students who successfully complete stage two will be eligible for entry into the external national exam for Physician Associates. Successful completion of stage two is required for progression into stage three.

A student who does not progress to stage two but has successfully completed all modules in stage 1 will be eligible for the award of Post Graduate Certificate in Clinical Sciences.

A distinction in the masters will be awarded if the following criteria are met:

- All assessments taken during the programme must be passed at first attempt
- A Distinction is achieved in MDE ***

21. Student development over the course of study

For undergraduate programmes, briefly summarise the academic development intended throughout the programme, both within and between levels, demonstrating the increasing demands on the learner. This may be in terms of intellectual development, skills, knowledge, 5onceptualization, independent learning etc. The statement should be in line with the programme learning outcomes giving a sense of how these outcomes are developed progressively through the programme.

All modules for the MMedSci Physician Associate Studies are core modules. In the first year, the four modules run in parallel so that students develop their clinical ability, underpinned by science in an integrated way. By taking a patient centred approach, based within the body systems, students learn about how to communicate

effectively with patients, the ethical and professional considerations that interplay with clinical practice and how to perform a range of clinical procedural skills in simulation. In the second year of the course, students progress and further build on their knowledge and skills by working in clinical placements in order to put their learning into the clinical context and see patients with a range of conditions in a range of different specialties. Students will undertake placements in both general practice and hospitals and they will increasingly focus on appropriate management and treatment (working within their scope of practise) as they progress through the course. Two of the clinical placements in stage 2 are self-designed by the student to provide the opportunity for them to tailor the course towards their clinical interests and future careers. Students will also complete a quality improvement project which focuses on a critical review of an area from clinical practice to evaluate whether changes to practice and processes are required. Towards the end of stage 2 they will be preparing for clinical practice as a Physician Associate.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Entry Criteria

A 2:1 or higher in a life sciences degree (such as Biochemistry, Physiology or Biomedical Science) with BBB grades at A level (or equivalent), and a keen interest to develop practical skills related to health and illness, and to work with the public in the health sector.

English Language requirements: Overall IELTS grade of 7.5 with a minimum of 7.0 in each component, or equivalent.

Applicants who meet the academic entry requirements and have a satisfactory personal statement and reference are invited to attend a multiple mini interview (MMI).

The Multiple Mini Interviews comprise a series of eight 8-minute stations. The questioning in these stations is typically based around the following areas:

- communication skills
- depth and breadth of interests (achievements in specific fields)
- evidence of commitment for caring
- knowledge of and interest in study in Sheffield
- medical work experience /Extended Project Qualification
- motivation for medicine
- understanding the nature of medicine
- values and attitudes
- outside interests

Each station is scored out of 5 and the students with the highest score are made offers.

The interviewers include: academic staff, clinicians, medical scientists, patients and senior medical students.

The admissions processes follow the DOH values based recruitment requirements.

23. Additional information

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.

Learning Outcome	Teaching						Assessment														
	Lectures	ILAs	Anatomy Practical	Clinical Skills /procedure Practical's	Small Group	Tutorials	Written Assignment	Written Exam	OSCE	Work Based Assessment	Oral Presentation	Online formative	Dissertation	Medical & Health Sciences 1	Preparation for Clinical Practice 1	Professional Practice 1	Workplace Learning 1	Medical and Health Sciences 2	Professional Practice 2	Workplace Learning 2	Development of Clinical Practice
K1	x	x	x		x			x	x			x		x							
K2	x	x			x		x	x			x			x							
K3	x	x		x	x				x	x											
K4	x	x			x			x			x							x			
K5	x	x			x			x		x								x		x	
K6							X						X								X
K7							X						X								X
K8							X						X								X
S1				x					x	x					x		x			x	
S2				x					x	x					x					x	
S3				x					x	x					x					x	
S4		x			x	x	x			x					x	x	x		x	x	
S5		x	x	x	x					x						x	x		x	x	
S6		x		x					x	x										x	
S7		x		x	x			x	x	x										x	
S8		x		x	x			x	x	x										x	
S9		x		x	x			x	x	x										x	
S10				x	x					x										x	
S11		x		x	x			x	x	x										x	
S12				x	x					x									x	x	
S13		x		x	x			x	x	x										x	
S14				x	x	x			x	x									x	x	
S15				x		x			x	x									x	x	
S16				x	x		x	x		x									x	x	
S17					x						x								x		
S18					x		x			x									x		
S19				x						x										x	
S20							X						X								X
B1				x			x			x					x	x					
B2				x			x			x					x	x	x		x	x	
B3		x		x	x		x			x					x	x	x		x	x	
B4				x	x				x	x					x	x	x				

B5		x		x	x		x		x	x					x	x	x				
B6		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x				x	x	x	x		x	x	
B7		x		x					x	x									x	x	
B8		x		x	x				x	x									x	x	
B9		x		x					x	x									x	x	
B10					x			x			x								x	x	
B11		x		x	x			x		x									x	x	
B12					x		x			x									x		
B13		x		x	x				x	x									x	x	
B14							X						X								X