

A	NATURE OF THE AWARD	
1	Programme Title	Physician Associate Studies
2	Final award	MPAS (Masters in Physician Associate Studies)
3	Exit awards	Masters in Healthcare Studies Diploma in Healthcare Studies Certificate in Healthcare Studies
4	Awarding institution/body	St George's Hospital Medical School, a constituent college of the University of London
5	Teaching institution	St George's, University of London
6	Programme accredited by	N/A
7	UCAS/JACS code	B960
8	QAA benchmark statements	Level M Competencies (See Appendix IIIa)
9	Date specification produced	April 2022

B	FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME	
1	Mode of study	FT
2	Usual length of programme	2 calendar years
3	Other features of the programme	Includes clinical placements in both years

C	EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME
	On completion of the Physician Associate Studies programme, students will be

expected to demonstrate that they can:

- formulate and document a detailed differential diagnosis based on an appropriate history and physical examination;
- develop and deliver a comprehensive patient management plan which involves the patient and his/her personal context, on behalf of the supervising doctor;
- perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and prescribe medications (subject to the necessary legislation);
- request and interpret diagnostic studies and undertake patient education, counselling and health promotion;
- be safe practitioners working in a wide variety of clinical settings within their scope of practice and under agreed supervision;
- be expert communicators who are empathic in a manner appropriate to a healthcare profession;
- critically examine health inequalities and the challenges of working in a multicultural environment with patients from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds;
- be aware of the limits of their competence and committed to acting within these limits;
- critically evaluate the context of multi-professional working in a team environment;
- be adept in the use of communication and information technology (C&IT) skills for health care;
- critically appraise the evidence underpinning their practice;
- be capable and motivated lifelong learners who are continually engaged in active professional development;
- understand the need to maintain and promote health, as well as to cure or palliate disease, and aware of their obligations to the wider community as well as to individuals;
- integrate theoretical and clinical learning.

D	<i>LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME</i>
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	<i>Advanced knowledge and understanding of:</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	Basic medical sciences underpinning practice for Physician Associates	Lectures Problem Based Learning
2	Pathophysiology and clinical reasoning	Small group work e-learning Self-directed work
3	Pharmacology	<i>Assessment</i> Examinations Presentations

	<i>Cognitive skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	Apply theoretical knowledge to practice as a Physician Associate	Seminars Small group work
2	Analyse and evaluate evidence underpinning practice as a Physician Associate	Clinical placements e-learning Self-directed work
3	Use judgement to make decisions within a clinical environment	<i>Assessment</i> Examinations Presentations Practice-based assessments
4	Undertake self-directed work to achieve module and course outcomes and accept responsibility for own learning	
5	Undertake continued professional development and up-dating to maintain the currency of theoretical and practice knowledge	

	<i>Practical skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	Formulate and document a detailed differential diagnosis, having taken a history and completed a physical examination	Clinical placements Clinical supervision Procedural skills sessions
2	Develop a comprehensive patient management plan in the light of the individual characteristics, background and circumstances of the patient	Use of Intimate Exams Teaching Associates
3	Maintain and deliver the clinical management of the patient on behalf of the supervising doctor	<i>Assessment</i> Objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE) Written examinations
4	Perform diagnostic and therapeutic procedures and prepare prescriptions for medications	
5	Request and interpret diagnostic studies and undertake patient education, counselling and health promotion	

	<i>Transferable skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i>
1	Use information technology competently to support academic and practical work	Small group work

2	Communicate effectively with patients and members of the health care team	Clinical placements Presentations
3	Produce written work of an appropriate postgraduate standard	Assessment Course work assignments Objective structured clinical examinations Written examinations
4	Manage time and set priorities within a pressurised environment	

E	Course Structure and features																						
<p>The course provides an intensive programme of academic study and clinical placements designed to enable suitably qualified graduates to work as competent Physician Associates within the UK health system.</p> <p>Taught modules will be as follows:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Applied Pharmacology</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evidence Based Practice</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foundations of Clinical Medicine A</td> <td>30 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foundations of Clinical Medicine B</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investigations in Clinical Medicine</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal and Professional Development A</td> <td>30 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal and Professional Development B</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills A</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills B</td> <td>30 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER A)</td> <td>0 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER B)</td> <td>0 credits</td> </tr> </table> <p>Students must pass all 11 modules to be eligible for the MPAS.</p> <p>Study</p> <p>The course will begin with an induction period which will cover the theory of clinical medicine, communication skills, organisation of the health service and practice in clinical procedures. After this, clinical placements will take up one day per week in the first year and full time in the second year, following the two or three week second year induction and practical skills teaching. Face to Face teaching sessions on campus take place 2-3 days per week in the first year with other sessions delivered remotely via the virtual learning environment (VLE) (1-2 days per week). In the second year teaching sessions take place every 3 to 4 weeks and these are a mixture of face to face sessions on campus and remote delivery via the</p>		Applied Pharmacology	15 credits	Evidence Based Practice	15 credits	Foundations of Clinical Medicine A	30 credits	Foundations of Clinical Medicine B	15 credits	Investigations in Clinical Medicine	15 credits	Personal and Professional Development A	30 credits	Personal and Professional Development B	15 credits	PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills A	15 credits	PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills B	30 credits	PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER A)	0 credits	PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER B)	0 credits
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VLE.

Clinical placements will be undertaken under the guidance of a supervising doctor. Each student will be assigned an overall clinical supervisor for a given placement. Supervision may occur directly from this supervisor or a designated appropriate medical colleague who is part of the same medical team.

To earn the MPAS

In year one, students will be required to pass all assessments relating to the following modules: Foundations of Clinical Medicine A, Applied Pharmacology, Evidence Based Practice, PA Applied Knowledge and Skill A, Personal and Professional Development A and PAPER A in order to progress to year two of the course. In the second year of the programme students will be required to pass all assessments relating to the following modules: Foundations of Clinical Medicine B, PA Applied Clinical Knowledge and Skills B, Investigations in Clinical Medicine, Personal and Professional Development B, and PAPER B. Students will be required to successfully complete the programme with the MPAS to be entered into the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination. A pass in all modules will be required for the award of the MPAS.

The description of the structure of the programme, including the lists of modules, is indicative and should not be regarded as full and definitive.

F	General teaching and learning strategies
	It is assumed that students will already have acquired the academic and study skills associated with the achievement of a first degree with at least second class honours before entering the programme. The emphasis is therefore on building on these foundations to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes through an intensive period of academic and practical learning during the two years of the course.
	Students will be expected to undertake a considerable amount of background reading to support their learning and to research topics independently to develop their knowledge base.
	There will be formal lectures delivering a significant amount of theoretical teaching and in addition, supplementary learning will take place in small groups or in interactive seminars. Students will be expected to contribute to discussion and debate and to share their expertise with others on the course.
	Clinical placements dominate the majority of the second year. Students will be expected to continue practising clinical skills independently until they achieve the required levels of competence specified for success on the programme.

G	Assessment
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This will be a mixture of written examinations, objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE), presentations and practice-based assessments. Formative assessments will prepare students for summative assessments which count towards their final mark.

H	Support for students and their learning
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The Course Director will provide overall academic direction for students while module leaders and teaching teams will provide support with specific topics addressed within the modules. Clinical placements will be under the direction of a supervising doctor at all times but students will also be expected to learn from other members of the health care team in practice. One member of the course staff will be designated as the Personal Tutor for each student.

SGUL is well equipped with IT and library resources related to the topics covered on the course. Students who need additional help with IT skills may seek individual support from IT and Library staff. Counsellors and chaplains are available on site. A learning support facilitator is available to help students who have difficulty structuring academic work.

I	Criteria for admissions
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The entry requirements and selection process will ensure suitable candidates are identified who can demonstrate the following:

- a) obtain a first degree in a science or health-related subject with at least second class honours from a UK university or an equivalent overseas qualification;
- b) University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)
 - Section score - Minimum of 500 in each individual section
 - Overall score - Minimum overall UCAT score (calculated every year)
- c) for non-native English speakers, demonstrate proficiency in the English language via IELTS score of 7.5 with at least 7.5 in writing and 7.0 in other three components regardless of where the first degree was earned;
- d) demonstrate experience of paid or voluntary work with people, preferably in a health or social care context;
- e) have demonstrated appropriate personal qualities, motivation, communication skills and understanding of the PA role in the selection process.

Advice on equivalent status of overseas awards will be obtained from the National Academic Recognition and Information Centre for the UK (NARIC). Certified translation of any certificates not in the English language must be provided.

Applicants with non-standard entry qualifications which do not meet all the above criteria may be considered for entry at the discretion of the Course Director in consultation with the Course Team and the Admissions Manager.

Applicants will be expected to write a short piece of written work to demonstrate their suitability for the programme and may be invited to take part in the selection process.

Offers to successful candidates will be conditional on satisfactory references, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and occupational health assessments.

J	Career opportunities
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Physician Associates are pending statutory regulation by the General Medical Council in Autumn 2023. Until such times, a national voluntary registration scheme for Physician Associates is in place. Graduates who have completed the course and the UK PA National Certification Examination successfully should be prepared to meet the registration requirements. These can be reviewed at the Managed Voluntary Register website:

<https://www.fparcp.co.uk/employers/pamvr>

Physician Associates are already working within the National Health Service in acute and primary care and there is growing recognition of the role and the contribution it can make to the health service workforce. The demand for PAs continues to exceed the supply of qualified PAs, resulting in an extremely high employment rate for graduates.

K	Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning
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Student and staff feedback, annual programme monitoring reports, visiting examiner reports, peer review of teaching, staff research and scholarly activity, clinical coordinator role, post graduate educational survey, placement supervisors' reports

L	Regulation of assessment
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Programme regulations make provision for a scheme of assessment to be drawn up and reviewed regularly. General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study also lay down general principles regulating assessment.

M	Indicators of quality and standards
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Evidence of the high quality and standards of the course is provided by the results of graduates at the UK PA National Examination, where there is an exceptional first-sit pass

rate for all previously graduated cohorts. As a commissioned course, we must regularly report to Health Education England and in addition we are required to complete a self assessment quality assurance questionnaire for scrutiny by the GMC.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the VLE.

Key sources of information are:

Course and Module Information on the VLE

The St George's, University of London prospectus

Course leaflets

The St George's internet site

General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study

QAA subject review reports