

Quality Assurance

Programme Specification

Masters, Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies (including 'Top up' Master's in Physician Associate Studies)

This programme specification applies to students starting the programme from September 2020 onwards.

Information for students: the programme specification is the definitive document summarising the structure and content of your degree programme. It is reviewed and updated every year as part of Keele's Curriculum Annual Review and Development process. The document aims to clarify to potential and current students what you can expect from the study of the subject over the course of your programme.

Names of programme(s) and award title(s)	Masters in Physician Associate Studies (MSc) (Including 'Top up' Master's route) Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies
Mode of study	Full time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Duration of study	2 years (1 year for the 'Top up' Master's route)
Location of study	All years are predominantly based at Keele Campus/CEC. The majority of clinical placements are based in Staffordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire.
Accreditation (if applicable)	This programme will seek accreditation from the GMC once that process begins as part of statutory regulation.
Additional Costs	In common with other programmes, Physician Associate students should be aware that there are further additional costs involved; such as the purchase of books, a stethoscope and travel to placements, which are detailed in section 12.

Details of professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB):

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/professionalstatutoryregulatorybodies/>

External Examiner(s) names: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/>

1. What is the philosophy of the Programme?

This programme, with content aligned to the National MAP Curriculum as defined by the GMC (General Medical Council). It will enable you to develop your intellectual, personal and professional capabilities by being given regular opportunities to practice the knowledge and skills required to be an effective and skilled physician

associate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing health environment.

The ongoing course development has benefitted from the expertise within the highly successful Keele University School of Medicine and from the GMC and national contacts from the PA Schools Council of which the current course director is a member. It also embeds suggestions from student feedback gained at regular intervals during the programme.

Keele University is a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold institution with a highly successful undergraduate medical school ranked 1st in the UK in the 2018 National Student Survey (NSS) Tables.

This programme is aimed at graduate (or equivalent) health professionals and life scientists. Potential student groups include:

- Life Science graduates
- Pharmacists, nurses, paramedics, physiotherapists, midwives and other health professionals
- Candidates with suitable certificated and experiential learning who have served in medical support roles in the armed forces.

The PA Top up programme, which runs separately to the main MSc Physician Associate programme, allows physician associates who are already qualified with a PgDip in Physician Associate Studies to study further credits to uplift their PgDip to a master's qualification.

2. Course aims

The Keele Physician Associate Studies course is a 2-year full-time master's programme, which prepares the student for the Faculty of Physician Associates/ Royal College of Physicians national qualifying examination designed to meet the requirements set out currently in the *Competence and Curriculum Framework (DoH, 2012)* and *Matrix Specification of Core Clinical Conditions (DoH, 2006)*, but will also align with the National MAP Curriculum once the GMC regulation has begun.

The PA Top up master's allows for the undertaking of a clinically based project to analyse and evaluate the role of the physician associate in the clinical setting and develops critical thinking, analytical and project management skills

3. How the course is taught

The course is an integrated programme that combines theory, practical demonstration of clinical skills, role-play, simulation using anatomical models and life models, plus problem-based learning (PBL) to assimilate clinical decision making and diagnostic skills to enable you to attain the required skill base and understanding in a range of clinical settings.

The programme is based on a hybrid approach that uses many methods including whole cohort and smaller groups, Problem Based Learning (PBL), virtual lectures, guided tutorials, self-directed study and in situ clinical skills teaching. You will have to undertake significant independent study to satisfy the course requirements along with up to 50% of the programme being spent on clinical placement over the 2-year programme. You will be required to attend and evidence a minimum of 1600 hours of defined placements. These are in defined clinical areas and attendance is mandatory for all aspects of the programme. This not only illustrates your engagement with the programme but also your attitude and professionalism towards your future role and career.

Lectures and seminars will run throughout taught weeks along with other online and technological based learning activities. Throughout your Year 1 & 2 placement periods you will continue to refine and develop your skills and knowledge through clinical experience. You will have set face to face or online learning time throughout taught weeks and will also need to dedicate a significant proportion of time to your own private study to develop your medical knowledge and clinical/examination skills to the level required to be successful at the Faculty of Physician

Associate Royal College of Physicians (FRCR) National Exam. Until you have passed these national examinations you are not allowed to work as a PA within the UK

The majority of clinical placements are based in Staffordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire. You will be expected to spend 40 hours a week on placement during the duration of the programme. There are 5 weeks per calendar year of holiday at times determined by the University. Due to the tight nature of the programme and the vast amount of theoretical content and placement hours, which need to be fulfilled, it is not possible to move these placement weeks nor holiday periods. Students are made aware of the whole two years structure on the first day of the programme so they can plan ahead.

Indicative timetable

In year 1 you will attend taught sessions for 33 weeks of the year with 12 weeks of clinical placements. The taught weeks will usually include 1 day in a GP surgery, when not in secondary care placements. These GP days start within the first few weeks of the programme.

In year 2 you will attend taught sessions for 21 weeks of the year with 24 weeks of full-time clinical placements. Placements are normally Monday to Friday. Some clinical work may fall outside of these times depending on the clinical area.

For the PA Top up master's, you will undertake a research methods module. This will prepare you for your clinically based project that you will undertake for your dissertation module. You will have a range of workshops and tutorials to support the progress of your dissertation project and the write up of your final dissertation. These will be face-to-face or online.

4. Teaching staff

Teaching will be delivered in the School of Medicine, within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. All members of the School and wider Faculty have the capability and continued commitment to be effective tutors. They have knowledge of the discipline; an understanding of pedagogy and will have a teaching qualification or be working towards a teaching award.

A number of tutors are also experienced researchers in their own clinical fields and can provide effective supervisory support to yourselves undertaking their dissertations

5. How is the programme assessed?

You will be assessed formatively and summatively using written examinations to assess knowledge and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) to assess your clinical and examination skills alongside communication. In addition to the above you will be required to complete two short reflective case studies/reflective essays in year 1, a prescribing/pharmacology exam in year 2 and to submit clinical journals each year and a skills log demonstrating competence in clinical skills over the two years, plus completion of the required clinical placement hours. You will also have a 15,000-word dissertation to complete, which revolves around a clinical area/service of your choice, with an analytical discussion and evaluation of the evidence base for this area and the role of the PA within it. The dissertation is spread over the two years of the course and staged in sections to ease the burden in an already busy course.

For the PA Top up master's, you will have written assignments or exams for your research methods module; depending on which one you chose to complete. You will then have a clinically focused project to complete which you will write up in a 12,000-word dissertation. As your project is clinically focused, you will need to be an employed physician associate working within the health service.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the programme students will be able to:

1. Apply knowledge of anatomy and physiology, medical sciences and therapeutics to support the clinical diagnosis and management of medical problems;
2. Interpret clinical findings and formulate differential clinical judgements;
3. Critically appraise and interpret evidence used in medical practice to benefit patient care;
4. Interpret and apply the key principles related to quality of care addressing professional, ethical and legal issues;
5. Competently undertake history taking and consultation skills integrating relevant psychological, social and biomedical perspectives;
6. Competently undertake core diagnostic and procedural skills by clinical examination;
7. Formulate and implement management plans in collaboration with patients, carers and healthcare professionals;
8. Effectively work in multidisciplinary teams, taking on a variety of roles as needed to support effective patient care and best medical practice;
9. Critically reflect on their role in providing multi-professional patient care and on seeking support when a clinical situation is beyond their competence;
10. Interpret findings from patient consultations to determine the need for further investigations when information is incomplete to make satisfactory diagnosis;
11. Apply critical thinking skills to interpret data and critically analyse and review the medical literature;
12. Demonstrate attitudes of professional behaviour and probity acting with integrity and sensitivity for the role of the Physician Associate;
13. Integrate knowledge and skills to demonstrate an understanding of concepts and methods related to research and critical awareness of current research in relation to professional identity and clinical practice;
14. Be able to apply research methodology to a clinical setting to assimilate data for analysis to improve service provision.

Keele Graduate Attributes

Engagement with these programmes will enable you to further develop your intellectual, personal and professional capabilities. At Keele, we call these our ten Graduate Attributes and they include independent thinking, synthesising information, creative problem solving, communicating clearly, and appreciating the social, environmental and global implications of your studies and activities. Whilst you will undoubtedly have already developed these skills and abilities to varying degrees, such existing capabilities can always be deepened and enriched. Our educational programme and learning environment is designed to help you to develop further as a well-rounded postgraduate who is capable of making a positive and valued contribution in a complex and rapidly changing world, whichever spheres of life you engage in during and after your studies at Keele.

Please refer to the programme webpages for a statement of how you can achieve the Keele Graduate Attributes through full engagement in the programme and other educational opportunities at Keele. Further information about the Keele Graduate Attributes can be found here: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/journey/>

What is the Structure of the Programme?

The programme is offered as a Master's in Physician Associate Studies. Throughout the 2-year programme you will attend a range of primary care and secondary care placements, normally within 30 miles of Keele campus: these may include University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust, Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Leighton Hospital), North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust (Harplands Hospital and Community Mental Healthcare services) and Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust. You must pass all assessments in both years of the programme to graduate. You must pass all elements of year 1 to progress into year 2. Only students who have successfully completed the whole programme are eligible to sit the FPA/RCP National exam. You will not be able to register for the national exams until all your results have been ratified by the University award boards. You will also not be able to work as a PA until you have passed these national examinations as well as passing the University based assessments. Should you decide you do not want to continue the course after passing all elements of year 1, then you can be awarded an interim award of PgCert in Health Science.

Year	Compulsory module	Module titles	Module detail	Credits	Assessment
Year 1	CLM-40140	Physician Associate Studies Year 1	<p>Integrated module including: Applied Clinical Knowledge and Therapeutics, Communication, Clinical Skills and Professional Practice Placements (12 weeks of block placements and 5 ½ weeks of single GP days during taught weeks =17 ½ weeks in total): General Practice Serial days: 27 days (216 hours) Secondary Care: General Medicine Block: 45 days (360 hours). Sometime will be spent in acute medicine during this placement also General Surgery Block: 15 days (120 hours)</p>	60	<p>Written Single Best Answer (SBA) papers OSCEs Reflective Case Studies Clinical placement hours verified and complete Year 1 clinical journal</p> <p>Full attendance with completion in hours as defined in the timetable, including required number of placement days</p>
Year 2	CLM-40142	Physician Associate Studies Year 2	<p>Integrated module including: Further Applied Clinical Knowledge and Therapeutics, Communication, Clinical Skills and Professional Practice Placements (26 weeks in total): General Practice Block: 30 days (288 hours) Acute/ Emergency Medicine Block 15 days: (120 hours) Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Sexual Health Block 15 days: (120 hours) Mental Health Block 15 days: (120 hours) Paediatric Block 15 days: (120 hours) Additional Clinical Experience Block 20 days: (140 hours)</p>	60	<p>Written Single Best Answer papers Written pharmacology/therapeutics /prescribing exam paper OSCEs</p> <p>Clinical Skills Passport Clinical placement journal for year 2 Evidence of completing a minimum of 1600 clinical hours over the two years with set number of ours in defined areas..</p> <p>Full attendance with completion in hours as defined in the timetable, including required number of placement days</p>
Year 1 and Year 2	CLM 40150	Dissertation module	An analytical and evaluative discussion and debate of a chosen clinical area and the role of the physician associate within this, reflected in current evidence base.	60	Written dissertation of 15000 words

'Top up' Master's route

Year	Compulsory module	Module title(s)	Credits (level 7)	Assessment
Year 1	HLT-40001 Or PAR-40029	Research Methods in Health Introduction to Research Methods in medical education (online)	15	2,000-word essay and exam consisting of short answers and MCQ OR 4,000-word essay to produce a research proposal
Year 1	CLM-40146	Evaluation of Clinical Practice (dissertation module)	45	12,000-word dissertation of a clinically focused project

6. What are the typical entry requirements?

- 2:1 honours degree in a biomedical or health science related subject (e.g. biomedical science, biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, healthcare science, pharmacy, nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy)
- All applicants should hold GCSE qualifications in Maths and English Language at grade B or equivalent. Applicants with equivalent or non-standard qualifications will be considered on an individual basis.
- Where English is not offered as a first language, applicants are required to achieve a minimum IELTS score 7.5 (no less than 7 in any sub-test) or equivalent.
- Applications would be welcomed from serving or ex members of the Armed forces including candidates that hold formal Nursing/allied health qualifications.

Along with those that have served in Medical support roles such as: Combat Medical Technician/ Regimental Combat Medical Technician (British Army), Medical Assistant (Royal Navy/Royal Marines), RAF/CMS Medic (Royal Air Force) these candidates would be considered on a case for case basis and via recognition of their prior certificated (RPCL) and experiential (RPEL) learning. They would also be eligible for entry to the PA programme following completion of a Military Transition Foundation course for prospective PA students. Successful candidates via this route will have completed their specialist training at the Defence School of Healthcare Education (or its predecessors) and have served more than 3 years in a medical support role and will hold one of the following Level 4 qualifications (or equivalent):

- Diploma in Clinical Health Care Support
- Intermediate level Apprenticeship in Health (Clinical Health Care Support)
- University Certificate Combat Medical Technician

For the PA Top up master's, you must be a qualified physician associate holding a PgDip and be employed within a health care setting within the UK.

NB: All the above are subject to suitable references, DBS and Occupational Health checks.

7. How are you supported on the programme?

- a. You will be provided with Course Handbooks that provide key information and guidance on structure, content and assessment, including dates for submission of assignments.
- b. Your Programme Administrator is based in the School of Medicine and is available by phone, email or in person.
- c. Your Programme Director and course tutors are available via email contact, in addition to face-to-face meetings.
- d. A supervisor who is suitably experienced and qualified to support you through the completion of your dissertation.
- e. You will be given a Tutor who will help guide your general academic and professional development. They will support you if you are undergoing academic or personal issues that may detrimentally affect your academic output.
- f. Clinical staff will provide mentorship, supervise your clinical experience and assess your practice according to the requirements of your course. You will be allocated a named clinical supervisor for your ward/clinical area.
- g. You can access the Medical School Student Welfare Service <https://www.keele.ac.uk/medicine/student-support-services/>, the School Disability Liaison Officer:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/disability/informationforcurrentstudents/disabilityliaisonofficers/>, and the University Student Support Service: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/contactus/>

h. Wider Network of Student Support

Students have access to a wide range of support within the University via Student Services incorporating:

- Disability and Dyslexia Support
- Careers and Employability Service
- Counselling and Wellbeing
- Student Financial Support
- Student Life and Learning
- Occupational Health

Keele Students' Union also offers support through their sabbatical officers and the Independent Advice Unit.

Students for whom English is not their first language are offered language classes, facilities and services by the University's Language Centre. In addition to credit-bearing postgraduate modules on English for academic study, students also have access to one-to-one tutorials for individual help and advice, and to a wealth of resources for self-study and practice.

8. Assessment Methodology

Following initial formative examinations completed in the first year, all subsequent examinations and all assignments are summative. You will also have revision session at the end of each theory block to guide your development and revision ready for the summative assessments which take place at various times throughout each year. There are also timetabled revision weeks. During these revision sessions exam style cases and questions will be used to ensure you fully appreciate the style and standard expected for the summative examinations as well as the National examinations. A maximum of two attempts at any of the summative examinations is allowed. This is due to the time constraints of the programme and the standard expected of the students on the programme to have attained. If a student fails on second attempt then there is always an opportunity to restart that year of the programme again. This is also national expectations across all HEIs running PA courses in the UK.

Due to the accelerated nature of the programme and high standards set in the National curriculum and examinations, all summative written and practical examinations must be passed for students to progress to the second year and complete the full programme, and thus eligibility to register and sit the FPA/RCP National examination.

Assessment Formats

The School uses a variety of assessment formats throughout the programme. These include both written and practical assessments. Examples of assessments include Single Best Answer (SBA) questions), Objective Structured Clinical Assessments (OSCEs), short answer written examination and written assignment/dissertation. This list is not exhaustive; other formats may be used to support specific elements of the course.

For the PA Top up master's you will have written assignment or exams for your research methods module, depending on which one you access and a clinically based project which is then written up for your dissertation.

All assessments will be followed by feedback to students as each assessment is designed to support students learning towards graduation and beyond. Feedback is provided in a variety of ways, including via an online portal, individual meetings with tutors and group sessions where appropriate. All students are encouraged to read this feedback and seek advice if they are unsure about any of it, to aid their development.

9. Learning Resources

All students 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, student common room and social gathering 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.

Additionally, the programme is also delivered in the Clinical Education Centre, within the Royal Stoke University Hospital. This houses many facilities for student learning. 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 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.

- 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 for two weeks or seven days. 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.

Details of opening times can be found on the Library website. To view more information visit www.keele.ac.uk/healthlibrary/

Using Libraries while on Placement

NHS Libraries in Staffordshire/Shropshire/Cheshire

University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/healthlibrary/> -

Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust:

<http://library.sssft.nhs.uk/>

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Leighton Hospital

<http://www.mcht.nhs.uk/research/jetlibrary/>

Please note: While on placement at an NHS Library you should ask about access to online resources purchased by the NHS: you should register for an NHS ATHENS account. Also note that different Trust Libraries may have different usage policies and opening hours to Keele (check the relevant web pages or contact the relevant Library for further details).

Don't forget you can check your Keele e-mail account remotely via Keele's WebMail service – this is available via the student information page: <http://students.keele.ac.uk/>

Keele IT Services

Here is a summary of IT Services offered at the Keele Campus (Library & IT Services Building):

- Open access IT Suite and Labs (Campus Library/IT Services Building)
- IT Service Desk for help and advice (open 7 days a week term time)
- Wireless network areas
- Software deals for specialist packages such as SPSS, NVivo
- Scanners
- Self-service printing in both colour and monochrome
- Adjustable disability workstation with scanner

More information available on www.keele.ac.uk/it

Here is a summary of IT services offered at the CEC:

- Open access IT Suite
- IT Service Desk for help and advice
- Scanners
- Self-service printing in both colour and monochrome

Electronic Resources

Many useful resources relating to medicine and health are freely accessible via the Internet, e.g. PubMed, Cochrane Library, the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination, Clinical Evidence, BioMed Central, and FreeMedicalJournals.com.

Keele also offers a growing portfolio of subscription electronic resources, databases, and full-text journals, relating to medicine and health care, e.g. anatomy.tv, AMED, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, BNI, CINAHL, SportDiscus, Academic Search Elite, and ScienceDirect. The University provides access to thousands of online journals, many of which are relevant to medicine and healthcare

10. Other learning opportunities

In Year Two you will be able to select a clinical area of interest for your placement. Often this will be in preparation for employment. The School will place students needing additional support for the national exam in the area that is likely to be of greatest assistance to them.

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

11. Quality management and enhancement

The programme director assumes overall management responsibility for the programme and is accountable to the Head of School and the School of Medicine Education Committee, with student representation.

The quality and standards of learning in the Physician Associate Studies programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement, which will also be monitored by the GMC once regulation is complete for PAs. This includes bimonthly programme board meetings which involve students, and also from bimonthly SSVVC (student staff voice committees), which are student led, and where valuable student input is heard to enhance the programme. This is alongside an extensive programme evaluation framework which encompasses feedback about all aspects of the programme both students, staff and the clinical supervisors in our partner Trusts.

The Education Committee of the School of Medicine 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 and as part of the University's Annual Programme Review (APR) process.

The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Internal Quality Audit (IQA) process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods, which we encourage all student to contribute to.

The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to the programme director and reviewed by the Programme Board as part of the Annual Programme Review (APR) process.

Findings related to the PA 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 in both years of the PA Programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Programme's 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/>

12. Additional costs

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 degree 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.

As a physician associate student you will be awarded a total £4,500 bursary from Health Education England (HEE), this will be paid to you monthly over the two years of the course to cover such items as books, equipment and travel costs. This is available for all Home fee paying students and to qualify you have to be registered on an approved PA programme within a UK university.

Activity	Estimated cost
Equipment: stethoscope	£60-70
You can expect to travel approximately 4000 miles a year travelling to clinical placements if you live in the vicinity of the Keele Campus. Placements are within 30 miles of the University.	Variable
You may need to pay for any additional DBS checks required by student selected placement coordinators. (routine admission DBS will be paid for by the university)	£44
Vaccinations and Occupational Health Checks	(These will be paid for by the University out of the HEE bursary.)

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. There is also a cost for joining the Medical Defence Union as a student, which is advised due to the nature of the programme and the clinical work, which is included.

NB: The cost of taking the Physician Associates Royal College of Physicians national qualifying exam is not included in the course fees.

We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

13. Allocation method for Clinical Placements:

In order to ensure that placements are distributed allocated in an equitable manner, and that the most effective use is made of available placements, placements are allocated by the School; it is not possible for students to choose their own placements or request certain clinical areas or Trusts.

In some cases, there is an opportunity, once the School allocation plan has been shared with students, for students to submit for consideration by the programme director a mutually acceptable swap. This will be entirely at the discretion of the programme director only entire clinical placements can be swapped not individual rotations.

Placement capacity is very tight and has to incorporate the needs of all students in the Faculty as well as PAs. Some Trusts also have students from other universities such as Manchester or Wolverhampton.

Special or exceptional circumstances:

The intention regarding allocation is to balance the travel burden across the student body but the School may make allowances for certain special or exceptional circumstances that may define the allocation for that student namely:

- a. **Criterion 1:** The applicant is a parent or legal guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 who reside primarily with them and for whom they have significant caring responsibilities.

- b. **Criterion 2:** The applicant is the Primary Carer for someone who is disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010).
- c. **Criterion 3:** The applicant has a medical condition or disability for which ongoing follow up for the condition in the specified location is an absolute requirement.
- d. **Criterion 4:** The applicant is nominated by the Medical School for pre-allocation on the grounds of educational special circumstances.

In addition to the above, the School requires students to identify where he/she or a close relative has had previous or current engagement (patient registration) with an allocated GP practice.

14. Principles of programme design

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

Department of Health. (2006). *Matrix Specification of Core Clinical Conditions*. London: DH.

Department of Health. (2012). *Physicians Associate Competency and Curriculum Framework*. London: DH.

General Medical Council. (2013). *Good medical practice*. London: GMC.

General Medical Council. (2016). *Achieving good medical practice*. London: GMC.

General Medical Council. (2018). *Outcomes for Graduates*. London: GMC.

General Medical Council. (2016). *Promoting Excellence; standards for medical education and training*. London: GMC.

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

UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>

15. Programme Version History

Version number	Author	Date	Summary of and rationale for changes
2.1	AS	20/4/18	
2.5	AS	11/5/18	
2.6	VH	28.6.18	
2.7	Dr Alison Pooler	19/10/18	Amendments following university validation of programme
Date approved by QAS		19/11/18	Approved as part of new programme validation
2.8	Dr Alison Pooler	23/4/19	Amended due to major modification of changing to a two-year full-time master's programme due to changes in student funding nationally
2.9	Dr Alison Pooler	23/7/20	Amended to include Top up master's route for qualified PAs and the Course Regulations in Appendix A
2.10	Dr Alison Pooler	25/4/21	Amended to accommodate changes due to new GMC curriculum and expectations of PA regulation
2.11	Dr Alison Pooler	30/6/21	Amended following scrutiny in SOM SEC 30/6/21

Appendix A

KEELE UNIVERSITY School of Medicine

COURSE REGULATIONS for MASTER'S IN PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATE STUDIES (including 'Top up' Master's award in Physician Associate Studies) 2020-21

These regulations supplement the relevant University Academic Regulations which are to be found on the University Website and the University Calendar. In the event of a contradiction or other discrepancy between these regulations and the University Academic Regulations, the University Academic Regulations shall be authoritative, unless approval has been given by Senate for a variation from the University Academic Regulations. Any such variations are listed in Section 8 of these Course Regulations.

1. Courses to which these regulations apply

These course regulations apply to the **Master's in Physician Associate Studies (including the 'Top up' Master's programme)** and awards are made under [University Regulation C.7 \(previously 2A\)](#) (Modular Postgraduate Courses, excluding Professional Doctorates and Research Degrees).

2. Fitness to Practise

Students registered on the Master's/Top up Master's in Physician Associate Studies are subject to the [University Regulation B.5 \(previously regulation 18\)](#) on Fitness to Practise.

3. Course structure

The full time Master's in Physician Associate studies involves the student undertaking 3 x 60 credit modules to accumulate 180 credits over two years. The Dissertation module will run across both years.

Compulsory module	Level	Module titles	Credits	Masters
CLM-40140	7	Physicians Associate Studies (1)	60	Core
CLM-40142	7	Physicians Associate Studies (2)	60	Core
CLM-40150	7	Dissertation module	60	Core

For the Top up Master's, the students are already qualified Physician Associates and will RPCL their 120 credits from their qualifying Diploma. They will then undertake two modules to increase their 120 credits to the required 180 credits to gain a master's qualification.

Compulsory module	Level	Module titles	Credits	Masters
HLT-40001 Or PAR-40029	7	Research Methods in Health OR Introduction to Research Methods in medical education (online)	15	Core
CLM-40146	7	Evaluation of Clinical Practice (dissertation project)	45	Core

Programme Step off/Formal Progression Points

The programme is designed so that the full-time masters can be completed in two years. Students will only be able to progress to Year 2 of the Physician Associate Studies programme on successful completion of **Physician**

Associate Studies 1 CLM-40140. Overall success on the programme will be after successful completion of **Physician Associate Studies 2 CLM-40142** and the **Dissertation Module CLM-40150**. It is only following this that they will be able to register and undertake the National Physician Associate examinations. If a student who has successfully completed year 1 who does not want to progress into year 2 of the programme then they can step off with a PgDip in Health Sciences.

For the Top Up Masters students, success for their award will be following the completion of the two modules, **Research Methods in Health HLT-40001** and **Evaluation of Clinical Practice (dissertation project) CLM-40146**.

Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) – Students who have completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies (120 credits) at another education provider, which can be evidenced with a certificate or transcript, can exceptionally apply to progress to the Masters stage under ‘Admission with advanced standing’ at Keele University.

Details of the RPL policy can be found here: [Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) Policy.pdf](#)

Only credits awarded at Keele University will be used in the Masters award calculation.

4. Attendance requirements

4.1 Attendance requirements

Full attendance is required on the full time MSc Physician Associate Studies programme. Students are expected to attend all timetabled sessions of the programme, as specified in each year pro forma, to include theoretical - learning hours, clinical placements, other environment placements and associated briefings.

Students are required to document, as specified in the Course Handbook, their approved absences and the reasons for unapproved absence.

The expectation of attendance at all timetabled sessions applies to every student. When Health and Conduct Committee reviews a student’s unsatisfactory attendance, the committee will consider the totality of their absences for all reasons. So, a student who has missed sessions (including approved absences) must consider whether a further absence would make their cumulative attendance at timetabled sessions unsatisfactory. If a student thinks that this may arise, they are advised to seek advice from the Course Director in the Medical School.

Students whose attendance is unsatisfactory will be referred to the Health and Conduct Committee.

Students on the Top up Masters are expected to attend all taught sessions of the two modules which they are undertaking. They are also expected to attend regular supervision as agreed with their supervisors.

4.2 Religious observance

The Medical School recognises that some students may feel unable to attend certain timetabled sessions because of religious observance. Guidance is outlined below of how non-attendance for religious reasons should be recorded and accounted for in the Medical School.

If formal Examinations fall on dates which conflict with religious observance, the School will endeavour to make alternative arrangements for those students who will be affected. Where possible this would be undertaken with representatives from relevant religious communities.

At the beginning of the academic year students should inform the PG course administrator of dates or part of days when they cannot attend timetabled sessions because of religious observance. If exact dates are not known it is important that students give as much information as they can and subsequently clarify with the PG course administrator when they know more. These dates will be noted and kept on the student’s file. Subsequent attendance will be noted in the normal way.

5. Regulations governing fieldwork and/or placement

Students are required to behave in accordance with the guidance offered in the GMC guide to Good Medical Practice (2009), RCP/FPA Code of Conduct for Physician Associates (2013) and to conform to the School of Medicine's Dress Code.

A Student Charter outlines the students' rights and responsibilities whilst on clinical placement.

Any student who is found to have a medical, physical or psychiatric condition, that may in the opinion of the Occupational Health department, prejudice their ability to perform their duties safely and competently, may be required to leave the course.

Any student who is found to have an undisclosed criminal conviction, caution, warning or reprimand may be required to leave the course.

All students must comply with the course requirements for immunisation. Failure to do so will result in exclusion from practice and therefore the student will be able to meet course requirements. In these circumstances the student will be required to withdraw from the course.

Any student that demonstrates unprofessional/dangerous/unsafe behaviour in the clinical environment will be withdrawn from placement immediately and their conduct will be subject to a joint investigation by the placement provider and the School. Behaviour that is in breach of these regulations may result in the students being withdrawn from the course.

During practice placements students are expected to conform to policies and procedures laid down by the organisation that provides the practice placement.

6. Regulations in respect of modules with more than one form of assessment

Where modules contain more than one form of assessment, their marks will be aggregated to obtain the overall module mark, with weightings as specified in the module guide in that year's Course Handbook. All assignments need to be passed, if one assessed component of a module fails, the assessed component mark will be capped at 50% on successful resubmission.

Work must be typed or word processed. The electronic submission may be subjected to the university plagiarism detection software, Turnitin.

All assessed work must contain a Front Sheet that includes a statement that this is the candidates own work.

A statement of the University's policy on plagiarism and other academic dishonesty can be found in [Regulation D.1 \(previously regulation 8\)](#) in the [General Regulations for University Examinations and Assessments](#).

Work must be submitted on the date and by the time specified for the assignment to the School of Postgraduate Medicine Admin Office (KH 70) Keele Hall, unless otherwise specified.

Assignments submitted on time will normally be returned to the student within four working weeks of submission. Marks indicated at this time are provisional and subject to change until ratified at the appropriate examination board.

If an extension is required please follow the exceptional circumstances process <http://www.keele.ac.uk/ec/>. Students should submit their claim as soon as they become aware of the problem and prior to the examination and/or coursework deadline, unless the very nature of the reasons for the extension wholly precluded a request any earlier. Please note the application needs to be submitted online via e-vision, via 'The Office' tab in the KLE, paper forms will not be accepted by the School. There is also guidance in e-vision on how to complete the on-line form. The School's exceptional circumstances panel will make a decision, based upon submitted evidence, and notify the student in writing of the outcome. Whilst the panel will take all reasonable evidence into consideration, further evidence may be requested.

This information is made available to the External Examiner at Examination Boards. Extensions will be considered on an individual basis.

Students who have not requested an extension but wish to present 'exceptional circumstances' to the Examination Board should follow the same procedure as above.

Students are strongly advised to speak to their Academic Development Tutor, Course Director or the Director of Postgraduate Studies before doing so. Extensions via 'exceptional circumstances' are not guaranteed.

7. Any instances where Senate has approved a deviation from any University Academic Regulation

The SBA exams in both year 1 and 2 have a pass mark of 54% rather than the standard masters pass mark of 50%. This is because the exams are standardised to set the pass mark using a modified Angoff procedure similar to that used in the national examination run by the Royal College of Physicians, which students have to pass following completion of the course. The pass mark for these assessments has been set based on past performance and represents the minimum mark acceptable to be considered competent in this element.

A student may be permitted to re-submit a modified version of his/her original work, at the discretion of the relevant Programme Manager and/or Course Committee, who may consult with the external examiner. The maximum mark achievable in relation to reassessment will be 50%, [see Regulation C.7 \(previously Section 12.2 of Regulation 2A.\)](#)

Entry requirements: there are specific requirements with regard to health screening and disclosure and barring service requirements. Occupational health screening and Disclosure and Barring Service details are subject to modification via external agencies, as such, the School will supply prospective students with relevant detail upon request.

8. Any other regulatory matters specific to the course not covered by the University regulations

Application for re-admission to a programme/module following immediately or closely on a requirement to withdraw will normally be considered only in the most exceptional cases, because: (i) confidence that the applicant has good prospects of successfully completing the programme/module would normally be absent if the applicant had been required to withdraw from the programme/module in the recent past; and (ii) the purpose of the various provisions in University Regulations to deal with academic failure of modules (e.g. concerning exceptional circumstances, and reasonable opportunities for re-assessment, repeating option modules and periods of study) and opportunities for the impartial hearing of appeal, and where necessary leave of absence, is to ensure that a student has every opportunity, consistent with the maintenance of academic standards, for success within the programme/module.