Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught

For Academic Year 2025/26

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	Masters in Physician Assistant Studies (MSc)
Award type	Taught Masters
Mode of study	Full-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Normal length of the programme	2 years
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	This programme has been accredited by the General Medical Council (GMC) and aligns to the national PA curriculum and PARA content map
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS). General Medical Council (GMC)
Tuition Fees	**UK students**: Full-time fee for 2025/26 is: £9,535*

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

** These fees are regulated by Government. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study in response to changes in government policy and/or changes to the law. If permitted by such change in policy or law, we may increase your fees by an inflationary amount or such other measure as required by government policy or the law. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions. Further information on fees can be found at http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/*

*** These fees are for new students. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/*

2. Overview of the Programme

This programme, with content aligned to the National PA 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 assistant 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 MBChB programme ranked 7th in the UK in the 2024 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.

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

3. Aims of the programme

The Keele Physician Assistant Studies course is a 2-year full-time master's programme, which prepares the student for the Royal College of Physicians national qualifying examination designed to meet the requirements set out currently in the PARA content map (GMC, 2024), but also aligns with the National PA Curriculum approved by the GMC.

4. What you will learn

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 conditions and presentations within the MDT;
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 clinical examination and procedural skills as outlined in the national curriculum and PARA content map;
7. Formulate and implement management plans in collaboration with patients, cares and healthcare professionals within the MDT;
8. Effectively work in multidisciplinary teams, taking on a variety of roles as needed to support effective patient care and best 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 clinical decisions under the supervision of a doctor;
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 Assistant;
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

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

5. How is the programme taught?

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, which you will be required to attend in full. 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 Royal College of Physicians National Exam (PARA).

The majority of clinical placements are based in Staffordshire, Shropshire, northern parts of the West Midlands 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. Student 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 29 weeks of the year with 16 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 20 weeks of the year with 22 weeks of full-time clinical placements.

Placements are normally Monday to Friday. However, in some areas, clinical work may fall outside of these times which will mean working in the evenings and weekends at times.

6. 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.

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

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

7. What is the structure of the programme?

The programme is offered as a Master's in Physician Assistant 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), Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Wolverhampton Hospital. There is no student choice in where these placements will be, however we do try to allocate on geographical location to where the student lives as closely as we can.

You must pass all assessments in both core 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 both of the core years of the programme (year 1 and 2) are eligible to sit the RCP National exam (PARA). You will not be able to register for the national exam until all your results have been ratified by the University award boards and all university fees have been paid.

However, should you wish not to undertake the dissertation module you can still graduate with a PgDip in physician assistant studies and still undertake the RCP national examination. The dissertation module runs alongside the two core years. This is to gain the expected learning outcomes plus credits to obtain a masters degree (an extra 60 credits on top of the two core years which are the clinically based content of the programme)

Year	Compulsory module	Module titles	Module detail	Credits	Assessment
Year 1	**CLM-40202**	**Physician Assistant Studies Year 1**	**Integrated module including:** Applied Clinical Knowledge and Therapeutics, Communication, Clinical Skills and Professional Practice **General Practice Serial days:** 18 days (144 hours) **Secondary Care:** **General Medicine Block:** 40 days (360 hours). **General Surgery Block:** 15 days (120 hours)	60	Written Single Best Answer (SBA) papers OSCEs Reflective Case Studies (x2) Clinical placement hours verified and complete Year 1 clinical portfolio and skills log in the form of an e portfolio Full attendance with completion in hours as defined in the timetable, including required number of placement days. Attendance is expected to be as close to 100% as possible to enable successful completion of the programme.

Year 2	**CLM-40204**	**Physician Assistant Studies Year 2**	**Integrated module including:** Further Applied Clinical Knowledge and Therapeutics, Communication, Clinical Skills and Professional Practice Placements **General Practice Block:** 20 days (160 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). This is used to catch up on time missed or there is also an option for an elective placement of your choice, including in Texas.	60	Written Single Best Answer papers Written pharmacology/therapeutics/prescribing exam paper OSCEs Clinical e-portfolio and skills log for year 2 Evidence of completing all clinical placements in full over the two years Full attendance with completion in hours as defined in the timetable, including required number of placement days
Year 1 and Year 2	**CLM-40206**	**Dissertation module**	To understand and apply knowledge of research methodologies and their relevance of EBP to the clinical role. Developing skills of analytical review of literature.	60	Part 1: Critique of an article (8000 words) Part 2: literature review and analytical discussions of the PA role presented as a paper for publication (7000 words)

Module Lists

Level 7

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Physician Assistant Dissertation	CLM-40206	60	Year
Physician Assistant Studies Year 1	CLM-40202	60	Year 1
Physician Assistant Studies Year 2	CLM-40204	60	Year 2

Modules CLM-40202, CLM-40204 and CLM-40206 make up the MSc Physician Assistant programme.

CLM-40202 and CLM-40204 make up the PgDip in Physician Assistant programme

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Learning Outcomes

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

Level 7

Subject Knowledge and Understanding	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
Acquire and apply to medical practice, biomedical scientific principles, methods and knowledge relating to anatomy, biochemistry, cell biology, genetics, immunology, microbiology, molecular biology, nutrition, pathology, pharmacology and physiology.	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204
Demonstrate knowledge of ethical and legal principles for physician assistant practice.	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204

Subject Specific Skills	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
Perform a defined range of diagnostic procedures and measure and read the findings.	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204
Perform a defined range of therapeutic procedures	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204
Demonstrate correct practice in a defined range of practical procedures	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204

Intellectual skills	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
Demonstrate skills in systematic literature reviewing and advanced methods of critical appraisal	Physician Assistant Dissertation - CLM-40206
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 the chosen area of clinical practice.	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204 Physician Assistant Dissertation - CLM-40206
Critically debate findings from evidence base on their chosen area and their professional and ethical responsibility towards patient outcomes and service delivery.	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204 Physician Assistant Dissertation - CLM-40206

Key or Transferable Skills (graduate attributes)	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
Demonstrate the ability to reflect on own clinical practice.	Physician Assistant Studies Year 1 - CLM-40202 Physician Assistant Studies Year 2 - CLM-40204

8. Final and intermediate awards

Master's Degree (MSc Physician Assistant Studies)	180 credits
Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip Physician Assistant Studies)	120 credits
Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert in Health Sciences)	60 credits

9. 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, and to submit clinical e journals each year, which contains skills log demonstrating competence in clinical skills over the two years, plus completion of placement timesheets. You will also have a dissertation module which is split into two parts. dissertation module is spread over the two years of the course and staged in sections to ease the burden in an already busy course. The first part of a critique of a published article and the second a literature review which is in the format of a paper for publication.

Assessment Methodology

Following initial formative examinations completed in the first year, all subsequent examinations and all assignments are summative. You will also have revision sessions 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.

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 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.

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/academic mentors 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.

10. Accreditation

The PA profession is now regulated by the GMC. This will ensure the safeguarding and regulation of the profession to work within the health service within the UK in line with its remit and scope. The GMC reviews the programme annually through its QA processes to ensure compliance with standards set nationally for the education and trainings of PAs.

This programme undergoes annual review with the GMC.

11. University Regulations

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

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

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

- 2:1 honours degree in a biomedical or health science related subject (e.g. biomedical science, biochemistry, anatomy, physiology, pharmacy, nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy)
- All applicants should hold GCSE qualifications in Maths grade C (4/5) and English Language at grade B (5/6) 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

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

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - Details of the RPL policy can be found here: https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/

Only credits awarded at Keele University will be used in the Masters award calculation. Any person who has previously failed part or all of a PA programme at another HEI will not be allowed to transfer over to this programme, and will have to complete the programme in full.

13. How are students 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 Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and is available by 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 an Academic Mentor 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 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.

14. 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, an interprofessional Health Library , which 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.

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:

- 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

15. 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.

We also recommend that students get a personal subscription to Geeky medics and Pass med to help with preparation for exams.

16. Additional Costs

In common with other schools of medicine, 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.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Clearance for an enhanced DBS check is mandatory. Students will be provided with instructions on how to apply for a DBS check, including a link to apply via a company called UCheck. There is also an online DBS update service to sign up for once the DBS certificate has been received, which allows employers to check DBS status and lets students keep their DBS certificates up to date online.

The current costs for a DBS check are detailed on the additional costs webpage:
https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/postgraduatestudy/tuitionfeesandfunding/postgraduatetuitionfees/additionalcosts

Activity	Estimated cost
Equipment: stethoscope	£70-90
You can expect to travel approximately 4,000 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 will need to pay for any DBS checks required for admission onto the programme	See website (details above)
Royal College of PA national qualifying exam	£876
x2 keele branded scrub tops	£60
Estimated total costs	**£1,026 plus DBS plus travel**

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

You will receive a travel bursary to hep with travel costs to placements from NHSE which will be paid into your personal bank accounts each month by Keele. This equates to approx. £5,200 (at time of writing)

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.

17. Quality management and enhancement

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

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

The quality and standards of learning in the Physician Assistant 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

18. The principles of programme design

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

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

b. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations

e. General Medical Council. (2022). PA and AA generic and shared learning outcomes. London: GMC.

f. General Medical Council. (2024). Standards for the delivery of PA and AA pre qualification education. London: GMC.

g. General Medical Council. (2024). Standards for PA and AA curricula. London: GMC.

h. General Medical Council. (2025). PARA content map. London: GMC.

19. Annex - Programme-specific regulations

Programme Regulations: Master's in Physician Assistant Studies

Final Award and Award Titles	Master's in Physician Assistant Studies
Intermediate Award(s)	PgDip in Physician Assistant Studies (if the dissertation module is not completed, but you are still able to take the PARA exam) PGCert in Health Sciences
Last modified	Oct 2025: amendments made post Leng Review to the role title and some text relating to the role.
Programme Specification	https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmespecifications

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

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

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

A) EXEMPTIONS

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

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

- **No exemptions apply.**

B) VARIATIONS

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

Variation 1: ***Variation to regulation D5.4***: there is no compensation on this programme and all students must successfully complete all assessment in all modules.

Variation 2: ***Variation to reassessment:*** Where reassessment is required; due to the nature and professional requirements of the programme (with modules lasting 1 year in length), this will be arranged 4 weeks from when the results are released.

If a student subsequently fails the reassessment then they will have exhausted their assessment attempts for the module, which will mean they cannot complete the programme and may result in them being withdrawn. This only applies to year 1 and 2 which make up the PgDip. The dissertation module is separate and students can still qualify without this if needs be and take their National qualifying examinations.

Variation 3: NHSE Extension Rules

Regulation C1, 1.1: the maximum period of registration for programmes commissioned by NHSE are limited by the NHSE Extension Policy to a maximum of twice the length of the original programme duration. For this programme it is 4 years (full-time) or 2 years (Top-up). For non-funded extensions the maximum extension is 12 months.

Regulation D2: the number of credits that can be taken beyond the end of funding date, for example due to leave of absence or exceptional circumstances (ECs), is prescribed by the NHSE Extension Policy and subject to a successful application to NHSE. For this programme it is half the total credit volume (i.e. 90 credits for the MSc; 30 credits for the Top-up) with approved ECs, or one third of the total credit volume (i.e. 60 credits for the MSc; 20 credits for the Top-up) without ECs.

Additional Requirements

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

Additional requirement 1: Students registered on the Masters in Physician Assistant Studies are subject to the University Regulation B.5 (previously regulation 18) on Fitness to Practise.

Additional requirement 2: Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

Clearance for an enhanced DBS check is mandatory on this programme. Students will be provided with instructions on how to apply for a DBS check, including a link to apply via a company called UCheck. Students must also sign up to the online DBS update service once the DBS certificate has been received.

Any student who has not completed the DBS application and sign up process, or who has not made the Programme Team, Student Support, Admissions Team aware of any Exceptional Circumstances, by the first working day in November (for September start programmes) or the first working day in March (for January start programmes) will be in breach of regulation B8 (11.1) in relation to providing incomplete information during the application process, and will enter the formal termination of studies process.

Additional requirement 3: Occupational Health

An Occupational Health assessment confirming fitness to commence the programme is mandatory on this programme.

Any student who has not completed all aspects of the Occupational Health process, or who has not made the Programme Team, Student Support, Occupational Health Team aware of any Exceptional Circumstances, by the first working day in January (for September start programmes) or the first working day in May (for January start programmes) will be in breach of regulation B8 (11.1) in relation to providing incomplete information during the application process, and will enter the formal termination of studies process.

Additional requirement 4: ***Attendance requirements***

Full attendance is required on the full time MSc Physician Assistant 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 School. of Medicine

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

Additional requirement 5: *Religious observance*

The School of Medicine 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 School of Medicine.

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.

Additional requirement 6: *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 (2024) and to conform to the School of Medicine's Dress Code.

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

Students are required to have satisfactory occupational health clearance to commence and continue studies on the programme. Students are subject to meeting the placement providers requirements for occupational health clearance.

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

As a professionally regulated programme the MSc physician assistant programme and its students are subject to Fitness to Practice regulation (Regulation B5) and Health and Conduct processes if required. Further details of these can be found in the programme handbook. Behaviour which is in breach of these regulations and proceses may result in students being withdrawn from the programme.

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

Additional requirement 7: Student Additional Placement Requirement

An additional placement requirement may be required where you:

· Fail your PSRB capabilities in a planned placement and an additional placement is required to support your regulatory standard attainment

· are outstanding skills and capabilities to support your programme progression.

· are outstanding your required PSRB capabilities to support professional registration.

· are outstanding PSRB work based practice days to support your course completion and professional registration. (N.B. this list is not exhaustive)

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

Work Based Placement Provision

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

Work Based Placement Pathway

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

Additional Work Based Placements

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

Additional Work Based Placement Considerations

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

Additional Work Based Placement Requests

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

Additional Work Based Placements Timings

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

Additional Work Based Placement Progression Delay

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

Additional Work Based Placement Travel and Accommodation

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

Programme Progression

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

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

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 13 October 2025

What's Changed

New version due to programme name change following the Leng Review (NHSE 2025). New modules - CLM-40202/40204/40206

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes