

## Programme Regulations: 2025/26

### Programme Title:

**MSc Physician Associate Studies – BB96**

**MSc Physician Associate Studies – 5501P \***

**\*This is a top up award only available to Newcastle University graduates who successfully completed the Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies**

### Notes

- (i) *These programme regulations should be read in conjunction with the University's Taught Programme Regulations.*
- (ii) *The MSc Physician Associate Studies is a non-modular programme leading to a professional qualification. The degree is equivalent to Level 7 on the University Qualification and Credit Framework.*
- (iii) *As the MSc Physician Associate Studies is a qualification leading to professional registration, the University has an overriding duty of care to ensure that all students graduating from the programme not only meet the academic requirements but are also physically and mentally fit to practise and are of good character. The case of any student whose fitness for professional practice is a matter for concern shall be considered under the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure.*
- (iv) *Students will be required to undergo appropriate DBS and Healthcare checks as stipulated in University and School policies.*
- (v) *Students will be required to fulfil all requirements for placements (including clinical access) as dictated by the relevant Care Quality Commission Regulated provider.*
- (vi) *The MSc Physician Associate Studies is an attendance-based programme and is principally delivered face to face at the Newcastle City campus and associated clinical locations. Although some teaching and structured guided learning may be delivered online, due to the clinical and integrated structure of the programme, sessions planned for face to face delivery cannot be substituted by other forms of delivery, including blended, online, and remote.*

## 1. Programme Structure

- (a) The programme is available for study in full-time mode only. Students studying the award as a Top up shall study in part-time mode.
- (b) The period of study shall be 2 years. Students studying the award as a Top-up shall study for 1 year.
- (c) All elements of the programme are core and compulsory.
- (d) Students shall follow the course of study prescribed below:

### Year 1

In the first year of the programme students will undertake taught sessions and self-directed learning to gain an understanding of the basic sciences underlying disease, the fundamentals of diagnosis and core clinical and communication skills. They will also undergo study to prepare for their dissertations. The learning will take place both on campus and on clinical placements within the region. Teaching and assessment will be fully integrated.

### Year 2

In the second year of the programme students will be based in hospitals and primary care settings within the region and will undergo a series of placements in a range of specialties (emergency medicine, paediatrics, general medicine, surgery, primary care, obstetrics and gynaecology, mental health) learning the core clinical skills required for the role of Physician Associate. In addition, they will complete a workplace based dissertation.

Top Up students

Students studying the award as a Top-up will complete a work-based dissertation.

## **2. Assessment methods**

Details of the assessment pattern for each year of the programme are explained in the Programme Handbook.

## **3. Progression and Assessment**

- (a) All assessments must be passed and there is no cross-compensation between the various elements of assessment.
- (b) Threshold marks for examinations will not initially be determined by the University common postgraduate scale but will be determined by rigorous standard setting methods appropriate to the nature of the examination. Following the standard setting process, marks will be scaled to align with a common scale pass mark of 50%.
- (c) The dissertation will be marked on the University common scale using category descriptors to guide the award of marks.
- (d) Students will be expected to demonstrate competence in the knowledge and skills elements of the programme and to be in good standing professionally in order to progress from Year 1 to Year 2 and in order to be awarded the Masters at the end of Year 2.

### **Year 1**

- (e) In order to pass Year 1 and progress to Year 2, students must attain a pass mark, or be deemed 'Acceptable' in each of the following:

End of Year Progress: Knowledge

End of Year Progress: Skills

Professional Behaviour

- (f) Students presenting for examination on the first occasion who have an overall mark greater than or equal to 60% (scaled mark) and are Acceptable in Professionalism will pass Year 1 with Merit.
- (g) Students failing to reach a pass threshold in the Skills or Knowledge domain and/or are deemed Unacceptable in Professional Behaviour will be deemed to have failed the Year and will proceed directly to resit. Further details regarding resit requirements are found in the Assessment Schedule.

### **Year 2**

(h) The Masters may be awarded with Pass, Pass with Merit or Pass with Distinction. End of year qualifying marks for Years 1 and 2 will be combined with a weighting of 1:2 (Year 1:Year 2) to give a final award mark.

(i) In order to be considered for the Masters award, students must attain a pass mark, or be deemed 'Acceptable' in each of the following:

Final Summative Assessments

Progression Assessments

Professional Behaviour

(j) Students presenting for final examination on the first occasion who have a final award mark greater than or equal to 70% (scaled mark) and are Acceptable in Professionalism will be eligible for the award of Masters with Distinction. Students with a final award mark greater than or equal to 60% and less than 70% (scaled mark) and are Acceptable in Professionalism will be eligible for the award of Masters with Merit. Discretionary awards of Merit and Distinction are subject to review of a student's professionalism record at the final examination board.

(k) Students failing to reach a pass threshold in any of the elements of assessment and/or who are not in good standing with respect to Professional Behaviour will be deemed to have failed and will be offered a resit or can apply to defer their exam until the next year and sit as an external candidate with standard resit regulations being applied. Further details regarding resit requirements are found in the Assessment Schedule.

(l) Students failing the Dissertation at second attempt will be considered for an exit award of a Postgraduate Diploma Physician Associate Studies if they have passed all other elements of assessment. Candidates failing any clinical aspect of the programme will not be eligible for the exit award. A Postgraduate Certificate exit award is not available on this award.

#### Top up Candidates

(m) Students studying the Top Up award will be required to pass the dissertation in order to be considered for the award of MSc Physician Associate Studies. Students who have a final dissertation mark greater than or equal to 70%, on the first occasion, will be eligible for the award of Masters with Distinction. Students who have a final dissertation mark equal to 60% and less than 70%, on the first occasion, will be eligible for the award of Masters with Merit.

(n) Further guidance for students is available in the Programme Handbook and Assessment Schedule.

#### **4. Exemptions to the University's Taught Programme Regulations**

(a) Due to the integrated nature and professional requirements of the award, the following variations to the University Regulations have been approved:

##### **Non-modular structure**

The programme does not operate a modular credit-based system, and instead uses an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Programme regulations therefore appear different in style and substance from other programmes of study. Regulatory requirements in relation to module and credit are not applicable.

## **Taught Programme Regulations (Postgraduate) - Return of Marks**

### Use of Standard Setting

The programme uses an alternative method of marking assessments. Each component of assessment does not necessarily carry a percentage mark and assessments are not weighted.

Standard setting, used to determine the required passing threshold needed to ensure a student can be certified as competent in a particular area of knowledge or skill or professionalism, is used for a number of assessments. The passing threshold for such assessments will vary depending on the individual assessment.

### Use of an Alternative marking scheme

The programme uses an alternative marking scheme for assessments. However, the final scaled mark of individual assessments is aligned to the University marking scale and the standard pass mark for Level 7 (50).

## **Taught Programme Regulations – Principles of Discretion**

### **Taught Programme Regulations – Reassessment**

### **Taught Programme Regulations - Resubmission of Dissertation – Postgraduate Taught**

## **Specific Progression and Classification Regulations for Post Graduate Taught Awards**

- **Use of Discretion**
- **Stage and Programme Averages**
- **The Award and Classification of Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates (Entry awards)**

In order to meet professional standards and ensure competence in all learning outcomes students must pass all domains of assessment. To meet these requirements discretion is not used by the Board of Examiners.

Each component of assessment does not necessarily carry a percentage mark and assessments are not weighted therefore progression and award requirements are individual to the programme.

The method of calculating the award and classification is also different to the standard University regulations.

Assessments are not weighted and so stage and programme averages are not used on these programmes.

- (b) In the event of any inconsistency between the programme and University regulations in relation to the above section, the programme regulations take precedence over the University regulations. Further guidance is available in the programme handbook which is available on the Medicine Learning Environment (MLE).