Regulatory Framework for Taught Postgraduate Awards in
Physician Associate Studies
(changes since 2015 in bold and underlined)

Introduction

1.1 These Regulations apply to the following University of Plymouth taught postgraduate awards:

| Postgraduate Certificate in Clinical Studies | PgCert CS |
| Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies | PgDip PAS |

1.2 Unless specific mention is made, these regulations relate to students on a full-time programme of study.

1.3 Students awarded the postgraduate certificate (as an exit award) will not be eligible to sit the National Examination (MSQ and OSCE) for entry into clinical practice as a Physician Associate.

1.4 Variations from these Regulations may be permitted but will be subject to specific approval under the University’s quality assurance processes. Students should refer to the appropriate student programme handbook for full details of the programme structure and assessment regulations.

2 Programme / scheme structure

2.1 Academic study will be organised into modules, specified in terms of credits.

2.2 The credit weighting of postgraduate awards will be:

- Postgraduate Certificate a minimum of 60 credits
- Postgraduate Diploma a minimum of 120 credits

2.3 Modules contributing to a postgraduate award must normally be Level 7. The Level of the module will be approved at the time of validation and in accordance with University guidelines.

2.4 Students may not be permitted to vary their programme of study at any stage due to the need to meet the outcomes of the Competence and Curriculum Framework 2012¹ for Physician Associates.

2.5 The minimum duration of the postgraduate certificate is one year full time. The minimum duration of the postgraduate diploma is two years full time. Enrolment onto these awards in part time mode is not permissible. The maximum period of registration is two

¹ http://www.fparcp.co.uk/professional-documents
years longer than the planned duration. Any application for an extension to the agreed period of registration must be submitted in writing to the **Head of Administration**.

### 3 Admission and Registration

3.1 Students seeking admission to a postgraduate certificate and postgraduate diploma programmes should normally hold an Honours degree or postgraduate diploma of a UK University or of the CNAA; or appropriate professional or academic qualifications deemed by the University to be equivalent to an Honours degree or postgraduate diploma.

3.2 Full details of the selection and admission requirements process will be detailed in the Physician Associate Programme Specification.

3.3 The nature of these awards is such that no recognition of prior learning or exemptions from study are normally permissible, other than transfer at an appropriate level of study from another Physician Associate programme. Any applications for such transfers will be judged in accordance with the policies of the Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry.

3.4 Applicants to these programmes will also be required to comply with the Faculty’s requirements for Fitness to Practise screening. Physician Associates, as directed by the Competence and Curriculum Framework, must be deemed fit to practise. Whilst the Faculty will endeavour to support successful applicants with an actual or potential health problem in their chosen career, some conditions may be incompatible with undertaking a clinical training programme. The Faculty will not admit to these awards any individual who, at the time of entry, would not be deemed fit to practice under the Competence and Curriculum Framework requirements or who cannot fulfil the health requirements. Upon enrolment to the programme, adherence to the Faculty’s Fitness to Practise policy is an on-going requirement.

3.5 Applicants for entry to programme of study may be asked to declare any relevant health related problems which may affect their ability to fulfil the requirements of a programme and be required to comply with the immunisation policy. Non-disclosure of a significant mental or physical health problem that is later discovered may lead to a student being required to withdraw.

3.6 The Faculty reserves the right to refuse admission to or exclude from these awards anyone with a criminal conviction, caution, court injunction or fixed penalty notice.

3.7 All students will be required to provide evidence of competence in English language, and for current standards refer to PA admissions criteria in the Programme Specification or on the website.

3.8 The Faculty shall maintain policies and procedures for appeals regarding the selection and admissions process.
4 Student Registration / Withdrawal

4.1 All students must register at the time of their admission to these awards and annually thereafter. Only students who have registered and paid any tuition fee required are entitled to tuition and access to any University and NHS facilities and assessments relevant to these awards.

4.2 A student who has withdrawn from these awards and subsequently wishes to re-join will be required to re-apply.

4.3 In exceptional circumstances, for example as a result of a serious illness or other difficult personal circumstance, a student may be permitted to interrupt their studies and temporarily withdraw from these awards. The period of interruption shall not normally exceed one academic year. Permission to interrupt studies shall require approval of the Head of Administration. Under normal circumstances, a student may be permitted to resume their programme of study from the beginning of the academic year only, subject to demonstrable clinical competencies and knowledge.

5 Assessment

5.1 The purposes of assessment are:
   - Objectively to measure a student’s achievements against the learning outcomes of the module
   - To assist student learning by providing appropriate feedback on performance
   - To provide a reliable and consistent basis for the recommendation of an appropriate award.

5.2 The assessment for each module will be detailed in the Module Record (MR). The student programme handbook for the award(s) will identify where students may access the MR. This will specify the elements contributing to summative assessment. Where assessment is by a combination of coursework and examination, the weightings of each element must be stated. Further information regarding the regulations pertaining to the assessment in each module will also be detailed in the Physician Associate Programme Handbook.

5.3 Coursework assessment will be set during the module period. Formal examinations (e.g. progress tests) will also be scheduled at set points during the academic year which may not always coincide with the University examination periods.

6 Successful completion of a module

6.1 Details of how students can successfully complete each module are outlined in the Physician Associate Programme Handbook. This is available to students via the Digital Learning Environment.
7 Rules of progression and procedure in the event of failure

The Award Assessment Board makes decisions on award and progression in accordance with University Regulations and justice is done to the individual student.

The constitution of the Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Board will conform to the membership laid down in the University's Academic Regulations, supplemented as necessary to meet any professional requirements. This may include the Director of Assessment and Assessment Psychometricians.

The Board will be considered quorate with a minimum one third of the specified membership.

Students should note that neither the Award Assessment Board, nor any of its members individually, can receive individual statements from students or their agents.

7.1 When considering student progression between the PG Certificate and the PG Diploma, the Award Assessment Board will consider student performance in each module. Consideration may also include the professional behaviour of the student and the student’s attendance record in order to fulfil the relevant requirements of the Competence and Curriculum Framework. Each student’s case will be considered on its own merits. The Award Assessment Board will take a holistic view of these data sets when making progression decisions.

7.2 If a student fails in any one module, they would be required to repeat the year in its entirety.

If a student achieves fails in more than one module, they may be excluded from the programme.

7.3 Where a student has submitted valid extenuating circumstances for the first or second attempts of a clinical competency, and therefore has not achieved the requisite number of clinical competencies to complete the Stage by the time of the Subject Assessment Panel, the Award Assessment Board will defer a progression decision and will offer a further referral opportunity. Progression to the next stage of the programme is dependent on successful completion of the referred assessment by the date set by the Award Assessment Board.

7.4 A student will not be allowed to repeat the same year more than once.

7.5 A student may be allowed to repeat two different years of the programme only at the discretion of the Award Assessment Board.

7.6 A student must submit themselves for all required assessments unless authorised absence or extenuating circumstances have been approved within the appropriate timelines.

7.7 Progression from PgCert to PgDip

The academic requirements for progression from postgraduate certificate to postgraduate diploma are that a student must have achieved at least a pass in all stage 1 modules.
7.8 **Graduation – Successful Completion**

In order to graduate with a postgraduate diploma in Physician Associate Studies, a student must have obtained at least a pass in all stage 2 modules in the same academic year.

7.9 **Award of Credit**

Module credits will be awarded at the Award Assessment Board, but progression through this programme does not depend only upon credit accumulation because of the requirement for currency of knowledge and skills in the programme.

8 **Awards**

8.1 A PG Certificate in Clinical Studies may be awarded to:

- A student who has successfully achieved 60 credits at stage 1.

8.2 A PG Diploma Physician Associate Studies may be awarded to:

- A student who has successfully achieved 60 credits at stage 2.

8.3 A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma in Physician Associate Studies with Distinction or Merit provided their average z-score falls within the boundaries of defined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Z-Score</th>
<th>predicted %</th>
<th>Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal or greater than +1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>PG Dip with Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal or greater than -0.5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>PG Dip with Merit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than -0.5</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
<td>PG Dip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4 Certain module assessments are excluded from calculation of the award. The module assessments used in the calculation of the award are set out in the Programme Handbook.

8.5 Resit data are excluded, unless a student has taken these as their first attempt.

8.6 If a student has repeated a Stage, the data used to calculate assessment z-scores is taken from the first attempt.

8.7 Z-scores are not weighted between modules, **nor assessments within modules**.

8.8 The module z-scores are averaged together and re-standardised, providing a single z-score for each student. The degree award is based on the final overall z-score. The Board will ensure that adjustments between cohort performance are adjusted for.

8.9 In determining the levels of award, only the overall z-score may be used by the Board.
9 Extenuating Circumstances / Late Submission of Coursework

The PU regulations in relation to Extenuating Circumstances and Late Submission of Coursework will apply.

10 Appeals

Appeals against the decision of an Award Assessment Board will be dealt with in accordance with Plymouth University regulations pertaining to academic appeals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version number</th>
<th>Status (final)</th>
<th>Owned by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016/17 v1.0</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Academic Regulations Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of any amendments

Document objectives

To describe the University’s regulations governing the award of taught postgraduate awards in Physician Associate Studies effective for the academic year 2016-17

Intended recipients

Students and staff

Approving Body and Date approved

Approved by Academic Board, 17 December 2014

Date of Issue

This version – September 2016

Review date

Summer 2017

Contact for review

Job Title

Academic Regulations Co-ordinator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Replaces</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-15 v1.0</td>
<td>October 2014</td>
<td>Terry Vallance</td>
<td></td>
<td>First Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15 v2.0</td>
<td>November 2014</td>
<td>Terry Vallance</td>
<td>2014-15 v1.0</td>
<td>Academic Board approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 v1.0</td>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Terry Vallance</td>
<td>2014-15 v2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 v2.0</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
<td>Terry Vallance</td>
<td>2015-16 v1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17 v1.0</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Terry Vallance</td>
<td>2015-16 v2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>