

### Merger with City, University of London

City, University of London and St George's, University of London have signed an agreement to merge. Subject to the necessary regulatory approvals, the merged institution will be called City St George's, University of London and will begin operating from 1 August 2024.

For students joining in 2024, there will be no change to the delivery, content and structure of the course. St George's will be going through the process to enable it to offer students the choice to still graduate with a St George's Hospital Medical School degree certificate or choose to graduate with a degree certificate from City St George's.

Further information, including frequently asked questions and contact details to submit further questions, are available on our website: <https://www.sgul.ac.uk/study/prospective-students/merger>



## Programme Specification

| <b>A</b> | <b>NATURE OF THE AWARD</b> |   |
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| 1        | Programme Title            | Physician Associate Studies   |
| 2        | Final award                | MPAS (Masters in Physician Associate Studies)   |
| 3        | Exit awards                | Masters in Healthcare Studies<br>Diploma in Healthcare Studies<br>Certificate in Healthcare Studies |
| 4        | Awarding institution/body  | St George's Hospital Medical School, a constituent college of the University of London              |
| 5        | Teaching institution       | St George's, University of London   |
| 6        | Programme accredited by    | N/A   |
| 7        | UCAS/JACS code             | B960  |
| 8        | QAA benchmark statements   | Level M Competencies (See Appendix IIIa)  |
| 9        | Date specification         | February 2024   |

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

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| <b>C</b>   | <b>EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME</b> |
| <p>The MPAS curriculum is based on the <a href="#">Faculty of Physician Associates curriculum</a> which came into effect in September 2023. Prior to this curriculum it was based on the Competence and Curriculum Framework (2012).</p> <p>On completion of MPAS, students will be expected to demonstrate that they have achieved a series of 'Capabilities in Practice (CiPs) which are split into two categories, generic and clinical. Each of these have been mapped against the MPAS curriculum.</p> <p>In summary, a newly qualified physician associate is expected to be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulate and document a differential diagnosis, having taken a history and completed a physical examination</li> <li>2. Recognise life-threatening and emergency situations and escalate care appropriately</li> <li>3. Request, perform and interpret diagnostic studies and therapeutic procedures, and recommend a management plan, including therapeutics</li> <li>4. Deliver and maintain patient-centred clinical management in partnership with the patient and multidisciplinary team, dealing with uncertainty when it arises</li> <li>5. Work in partnership with patients from diverse backgrounds to agree comprehensive and individualised management plans</li> <li>6. Undertake patient education, counselling and health promotion.</li> </ol> <p><i>These are all subject to scope of their role, competence , legislation and regulation.</i></p> |  |

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| <b>D</b> | <b>LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME</b> |
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|   | <b>Advanced knowledge and understanding of:</b>                       | <b>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</b> |
| 1 | Basic medical sciences underpinning practice for Physician Associates | Lectures<br>Problem Based Learning                          |

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| 2 | Pathophysiology and clinical reasoning | Small group work<br>e-learning<br>Self-directed work |
| 3 | Pharmacology                           | <b>Assessment</b><br>Examinations<br>Presentations   |

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

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

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| 5 | Request and interpret diagnostic studies and undertake patient education, counselling and health promotion |  |
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|   | <b><i>Transferable skills: the ability to</i></b>                             | <b><i>Related teaching and learning methods and strategies</i></b> |
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| 1 | Use information technology competently to support academic and practical work | Small group work<br>Clinical placements                            |
| 2 | Communicate effectively with patients and members of the health care team     | Presentations  |
| 3 | Produce written work of an appropriate postgraduate standard                  | <b>Assessment</b><br>Course work assignments                       |
| 4 | Manage time and set priorities within a pressurised environment               | Objective structured clinical examinations<br>Written examinations |

| <b>E</b>   | <b>Course Structure and features</b>   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
|--|--|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------|---|------------|---|------------|--|------------|--|------------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
|  | <p>The course provides an intensive programme of academic study and clinical placements designed to enable suitably qualified graduates to work as competent Physician Associates within the UK health system.</p> <p>Taught modules will be as follows:</p> <table> <tr> <td>Applied Pharmacology</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evidence Based Practice</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foundations of Clinical Medicine A</td> <td>30 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Foundations of Clinical Medicine B</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investigations in Clinical Medicine</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal and Professional Development A</td> <td>30 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal and Professional Development B</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA Applied Clinical Knowledge &amp; Skills A</td> <td>15 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA Applied Clinical Knowledge &amp; Skills B</td> <td>30 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER A)</td> <td>0 credits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER B)</td> <td>0 credits</td> </tr> </table> <p>Students must pass all 11 modules to be eligible for the MPAS.</p> | Applied Pharmacology | 15 credits | Evidence Based Practice | 15 credits | Foundations of Clinical Medicine A | 30 credits | Foundations of Clinical Medicine B | 15 credits | Investigations in Clinical Medicine | 15 credits | Personal and Professional Development A | 30 credits | Personal and Professional Development B | 15 credits | PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills A | 15 credits | PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills B | 30 credits | PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER A) | 0 credits | PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER B) | 0 credits |
| Applied Pharmacology                             | 15 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| Evidence Based Practice                          | 15 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| Foundations of Clinical Medicine A               | 30 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| Foundations of Clinical Medicine B               | 15 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| Investigations in Clinical Medicine              | 15 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| Personal and Professional Development A          | 30 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| Personal and Professional Development B          | 15 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills A         | 15 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| PA Applied Clinical Knowledge & Skills B         | 30 credits   |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER A) | 0 credits  |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |
| PA as a Professional Evaluation Review (PAPER B) | 0 credits  |                      |            |                         |            |                                    |            |                                    |            |                                     |            |   |            |   |            |  |            |  |            |  |           |  |           |

## **Study**

The course will begin with an induction period which will cover the theory of clinical medicine, communication skills, organisation of the health service and practice in clinical procedures.

After this, clinical placements are once weekly in the first year and full time in the second year, following the two or three week second year induction and practical skills teaching. Face to face teaching sessions on campus take place 2-3 days per week in the first year with other sessions delivered remotely via the virtual learning environment (VLE) (1-2 days per week). In the second year, teaching sessions take place every 3 to 4 weeks and these are a mixture of face to face sessions on campus and remote delivery via the VLE.

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

## **To earn the MPAS**

In year one, students will be required to pass all assessments relating to the following modules: Foundations of Clinical Medicine A, Applied Pharmacology, Evidence Based Practice, PA Applied Knowledge and Skill A, Personal and Professional Development A and PAPER A in order to progress to year two of the course.

In the second year of the programme students will be required to pass all assessments relating to the following modules: Foundations of Clinical Medicine B, PA Applied Clinical Knowledge and Skills B, Investigations in Clinical Medicine, Personal and Professional Development B, and PAPER B.

Students will be required to successfully complete the programme with the MPAS to be entered into the UK Physician Associate National Certification Examination. A pass in all modules will be required for the award of the MPAS.

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

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

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

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| <b>H</b> | <b>Support for students and their learning</b>  |
|          | <p>The Course Director will provide overall academic direction for students while module leaders and teaching teams will provide support with specific topics addressed within the modules. Clinical placements will be under the direction of a supervising doctor at all times but students will also be expected to learn from other members of the health care team in practice. One member of the course staff will be designated as the Personal Tutor for each student.</p> <p>SGUL is well equipped with IT and library resources related to the topics covered on the course. Students who need additional help with IT skills may seek individual support from IT and Library staff. Counsellors and chaplains are available on site. A learning support facilitator is available to help students who have difficulty structuring academic work.</p> |

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

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

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

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

Applicants are expected to write a short piece of written work to demonstrate their suitability for the programme and this may be used as part of the selection process.

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

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| <b>J</b>  | <b>Career opportunities</b> |
| <p>Following the House of Lord's debate on 26 February 2024, qualified Physician Associates will be regulated by the General Medical Council towards the end of 2024. Until this time, a national voluntary registration scheme for Physician Associates is in place.</p> <p>Physician Associates are already working within the National Health Service in acute and primary care and there is growing recognition of the role and the contribution it can make to the health service workforce.</p> |                             |

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| <b>K</b>  | <b>Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning</b> |
| <p>Student and staff feedback, annual programme monitoring reports, visiting examiner reports, peer review of teaching, staff research and scholarly activity, clinical coordinator</p> |  |

role, placement quality assurance visits, postgraduate teaching and education survey (PTES), placement supervisors' reports, GMC accreditation visit and self-assessment survey

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

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| <b>M</b> | <b>Indicators of quality and standards</b> |
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Evidence of the high quality and standards of the course is provided by the results of graduates at the UK PA National Examination, where there is an exceptional first-sit pass rate for all previously graduated cohorts. As a commissioned course, we must regularly report to Health Education England and in addition we are required to complete a self-assessment quality assurance questionnaire for scrutiny by the GMC.

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

Key sources of information are:

Course and Module Information on the VLE

The St George's, University of London prospectus

Course leaflets

The St George's internet site

General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study

QAA subject review reports