



University of Leeds

MSc Physician Associate Studies

CLASSROOM TO CLINIC – YEAR 1

GENERAL PRACTICE TUTOR GUIDE

2024-2025

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Introduction

Thank you for your involvement in the MSc Physician Associate Studies programme at the University of Leeds! This tutor guide is designed to provide you with some background in terms of our students' learning journey before they start their placement, to outline the aims of the placement, how student progress is assessed, and to provide some suggested activities. We have tried to keep this guide as concise as possible, but please note that further and more comprehensive information about the course can be found on the [placements website](#).

This will be the first clinical placement experience for our year 1 students. Whilst some students may have worked or volunteered in a healthcare environment before, many do not have extensive experience. Although they may not have much clinical experience yet, all our physician associate students have undertaken an undergraduate degree in a bioscience or healthcare science subject. Before they start their primary care placement, they will have been taught the basics of clinical history taking and examination and have attended skills sessions covering infection control, handwashing, basic life support, and moving and handling.

The year 1 physician associate student(s) allocated to you will be with you for **30 Fridays** over the 2024/25 academic year. The expectation being that they attend for an average of 8 hours per day (in line with the Department of Health and Social Care's Tariff Guidance).

Whilst at the beginning of the year the student involvement will be observational, by the end of the year and with your guidance and support in applying the theoretical knowledge and skills learnt on campus, they should be able to undertake a consultation, formulate a differential diagnosis and begin to propose a management plan.

Dates of Placement

Every Friday between the 27th September 2024 and the 23rd May 2025, excluding:

- 1st November
- 20th and 27th December
- 7th March
- 18th April

The 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th June can be used as catch-up days if any placement days are missed. All students should complete the year having done 30 days of GP placement.

IMPORTANT CHANGES for 2024-2025

Please note that in line with the ongoing development of our assessment strategy and in preparation for GMC regulation of the profession in December 2024, there are a number of changes to the assessments students will be undertaking whilst on placement. The assessment section of this guide contains more detail.

Overall aims of this placement:

- Develop consultation skills to the point of being able to run a consultation independently under indirect supervision (with a structured debrief).
- Improve communication skills with patients, carers and staff.
- Become aware of the professional and ethical behaviour and attitudes expected in a clinical setting; for example, a professional attitude towards patients and carers, respect for colleagues, the importance of confidentiality and an ethical approach in clinical encounters, appropriate attire.
- Understand the role of a physician associate working in primary care.
- Understand the role of clinical information systems in patient care and the interface between primary/secondary and tertiary care in health care delivery.
- Develop an understanding of safe prescribing.

For further information on the aims and expectations of this placement and other placements within the 2-year programme, please take a look at our [website](#).

Essential Components

PRE-PLACEMENT CHECKS

Please note there are several pre-placement checks undertaken by the university before they are allowed to attend placement with you:

- University student registration (this instigates insurance)
- DBS Clearance
- Occupational Health Clearance
- NHS smartcard registration
- ID badge collection
- Scrubs collection
- Completion of Data Security Awareness module and assessment
- Mandatory skills signed off:
 - Handwashing

- Moving & Handling
- BLS

You will be notified if a student has not completed any of these and there is a delay to them starting placement. If you wish to confirm any of the above yourself, they will be documented on their PebblePad portfolio so please ask the student if you wish to see them.

INDUCTION

The induction period will give your students time to acclimatise to your practice and get in depth knowledge of who each member of staff is; it will also offer you time to assess your students' needs and learning aims.

➤ Administrative

At the start of the placement, you should provide an administrative induction including the following:

- Patient confidentiality
- Access to IT facilities, and rules regarding appropriate use of PCs/internet
- Student and placement liability, and requirements for appropriate supervision of procedures
- Placement health and safety procedures and risk assessment
- Personal health, social, cultural or religious requirements of the students
- Arrangements for communication in case of sickness or other absences, or emergencies
- Who's who!

➤ Clinical

There should also be a clinical induction to:

- clarify aims and objectives;
- discuss the proposed learning timetable;
- clarify assessment requirements;
- clarify who their overall educational supervisor is and who is responsible for clinical supervision for each timetabled session – **if you wish to find out more about PA student supervision on placement, please read the Guidance document on our [website](#) and do get in touch if you have any questions.**

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is one of the key professional attributes. We expect students to attend 100% of the sessions on the course as a mark of respect for their colleagues, staff and particularly patients.

If they are absent whilst on clinical placement, students should contact the relevant person at the placement and pastudies@leeds.ac.uk to indicate how long they expect to be absent.

It is expected that they make up any missed days. If this is not possible, they must contact the PA team to decide next steps.

Students have their own timesheet, which they complete and it is reviewed by the university at the end of each term. This timesheet also needs to be reviewed by the educational supervisor at the end of each term.

You do not need to email us each time a student is absent but if you have concerns in regards to attendance, please email s.d.howarth@leeds.ac.uk

ASSESSMENT

Case Study with focus on health promotion

Given the national focus on health promotion and illness prevention in improving population health and that understanding the role of the PA in this area is a key outcome of the FPA Physician Associate Curriculum, students are introduced to this topic at an early stage in the course.

Starting from this academic year and following on from tutorials delivered on campus, students are required to undertake a case study based on a patient whose consultation they have either observed or participated in and explore how health promotion as a method of illness prevention can be considered at an individual level.

This assignment is introduced in Term 1 and students ***may require support from their supervisor to identify a suitable patient*** with a long-term condition. Ideally, they should be provided with this opportunity before their reading week (i.e. by 25th October 2024) so they have time to work on their assignment.

Examples of where they might identify a patient would be a consultation where modifiable behaviours were discussed as part of a wider conversation or were part of a health promotion clinic - e.g. a smoking cessation clinic or a chronic health clinic such as a COPD review clinic. We would envisage that, with the patient's verbal consent, the student would be able to explore more of the patient's background and can evaluate the capability, motivation and opportunity of an individual patient to engage in behaviour change and health promotion.

There is no requirement for the student to have led the discussion around health promotion or to suggest /follow up on interventions.

The student assignment also requires them to consider both *national and local* health promotion initiatives to promote health for the patient so that they can focus on providing patient centred care.

Please note that this piece of work will be marked by the programme team, not by placement supervisors.

Thank you in advance for your support in helping the student to identify a suitable patient.

If you have any questions about this assignment – please email Janet Cassie j.a.cassie@leeds.ac.uk

Professional Portfolio

To prepare PA students for maintaining a portfolio of attainment post-qualification, we have reviewed the workplace-based assessments that students are asked to complete with their supervisors whilst on placement. These have been adapted to align more closely with the Faculty of Physician Associates portfolio and to allow students to demonstrate their development over the course of their studies.

While we are still using Pebble Pad as the online platform, you will notice some changes to both the requirements and templates. Students are required to complete assessments every term and these are categorised into Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS), MiniCEX, Case Based Discussions and Reflections. These assessments should be reviewed along with the student's attendance record when completing the Assessment of Progress form. There are set requirements for how many and which WBAs should be completed each term. This is outlined in *Workplace-based assessments: Expectations of a Year 1 physician associate student*, which can be found [here](#).

1. Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS; completed with any suitably qualified healthcare professional)

Students should have opportunities to be assessed and receive feedback on a range of practical skills (eg venepuncture, intramuscular injection). They will have received training on campus on how to perform these procedures prior to undertaking them on placement. The DOPS assessment tool is designed to evaluate the student's performance in undertaking the selected practical procedure, against a structured checklist. The assessor can be any healthcare professional who is qualified to perform this procedure.

You will be required to give your overall assessment as to what level of supervision you assess the student as being competent to perform this procedure at:

Level 1 – Observation only

Level 2 – Able to perform under direct supervision

Level 3 – Able to perform under indirect supervision

For more information on DOPS (what they are and what level they should be undertaken at), please see *Workplace-based assessments: Expectations of a Year 1 physician associate student*, which can be found [here](#).

2. Mini-CEX (completed with any suitably qualified healthcare professional)

A Mini-Clinical Evaluation Exercise (MiniCEX) is an observed, real-life interaction between the student and a patient. Through observing the interaction, students should be assessed on a number of aspects of the encounter – these will vary according to the MiniCEX chosen and their stage of training but may include history taking skills, physical examination, diagnostic skills, communication and listening skills etc.

For more information on MiniCEX (what they are and what level they should be undertaken at), please see *Workplace-based assessments: Expectations of a Year 1 physician associate student*, which can be found [here](#).

3. Case Based Discussion (completed with any suitably qualified healthcare professional)

Case Based Discussions are used to evidence and demonstrate a student's understanding of the assessment and management of a patient and to provide feedback on their clinical reasoning, decision making and the application of medical knowledge in relation to patient care. It also serves as a method to document conversations about and presentations of cases by the student. These may be consultations that they have observed rather than led.

For more information on Case Based Discussions (what they are and what level they should be undertaken at), please see *Workplace-based assessments: Expectations of a Year 1 physician associate student*, which can be found [here](#).

4. Reflections

Students are required to complete a number of reflections based on themes such as patient safety, team working, and self-awareness. These require the student to reflect on an event that took place in a clinical setting, thinking about the impact that this had on patients and colleagues and a focus on what the student has learnt from this experience.

They should complete a minimum of 1 reflection by the end of each term – a total of 3 over the course of Year 1. These are not assessed but we would encourage review and discussion of the student's reflection during the end of term meeting with their supervisor.

For more information on what these interactions should cover, please see *Workplace-based assessments: Expectations of a Year 1 physician associate student*, which can be found [here](#).

5. Assessment of Progress Form (completed in person with the educational supervisor)

A meeting should be scheduled with the student's educational supervisor at least once a term in order to reviewing progress so far (DOPS, MiniCEX, Case Based Discussions, Reflections, attendance). The Assessment of Progress form should be completed to document and evidence what was discussed in the meeting and a personal development plan should be co-created to address any learning needs.

If you would like to discuss problems related to a particular student identified during this meeting, please contact Sarah Howarth (s.d.howarth@leeds.ac.uk).

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

➤ Placement evaluation form

We collect feedback from students after each placement and use it carefully to improve aspects of the PA Studies curriculum and placements.

If any concerns are raised, these will be communicated to you as soon as possible. All feedback will be communicated in due course for you to evaluate within your practice.

➤ Clinical Placement Reporting Tool

The Clinical Placement Reporting Tool allows staff and students to inform the School about the positive experiences that they've had as well as highlight any problems or issues that they may have encountered.

Staff and students have two options after accessing the Tool – 'leave a commendation' and 'raise a concern'. Commendations are intended to recognise individuals that have made significant contributions to a placement experience through their outstanding teaching, professionalism, or attitude. Both students and staff can submit feedback for one another, and the named individual will be sent the feedback instantly if an email address is provided.

Concerns should be raised if a staff member or student has engaged in behaviour that has either contributed negatively to the placement experience or falls short of the professional standards expected of their role. This includes harassment, bullying and discrimination, as well as any other behaviour that might jeopardise the delivery of safe and equitable healthcare or a supportive and effective learning environment. The School will work with individuals who submit a concern to ensure that issues are fully-investigated and action taken where appropriate.

The placement provider version of the Tool can be found [here](#).

Please remember if you would like to discuss an issue that arises concerning a student (good or bad), the PA team are always happy for you to send an email or call to discuss it further.

Teaching delivered, suggested activities and assessment deadlines

The clinical skills and body systems covered each week are outlined below so that you can see how the students develop through year 1 and what you can do to support them. If you want to send us a draft timetable for feedback, we are happy to help.

Please do not teach or timetable clinical skills (e.g. sc/im injections or venepuncture) before students have been taught them by the University of Leeds clinical skills team. They should be signed off on these by the university first (see below)

TERM 1

Suggested placement activities:		
27/09/24	Induction period to include the items set out in the induction information.	
04/10/24		
11/10/24		
18/10/24	<p>The focus should be observation of the student and providing feedback during this term.</p> <p>Students should:</p> <p>Observe clinics – these could be led by a GP, PA, ANP or any other appropriately qualified HCPs.</p> <p>Work with Practice Nurses and HCAs.</p> <p>Join home visits and care home visits.</p> <p>Identify with support of supervisor a patient to focus on for the case study with health promotion</p> <p>Undertake history and examination of appropriate patients under direct supervision. This may become indirect towards the end of the term.</p> <p>Practise communication skills – students are not expected to be conducting solo consultations or initiating prescriptions.</p>	<p>Skills overview:</p> <p>Pulse, blood pressure readings, respiratory rate, temperature, oxygen saturations, PEFR, Body Mass Index and urinalysis.</p> <p>Clinical examinations, such as CVS and RS.</p> <p>Flu/covid clinics from the 30th October.</p>
25/10/24		
<i>Reading week</i>		
08/11/24		
15/11/24		
22/11/24		
29/11/24		
06/12/24		
13/12/24		

Assessment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of Progress Form 1 • DOPS (10 as specified in the WBA Guide) • MiniCEX (2 as specified in the WBA Guide) • CBD (1 as specified in the WBA Guide) • 1 x Reflection <p style="text-align: center;">DEADLINE – 13th DECEMBER</p>
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Curriculum teaching on campus Term 1:		
	Body system covered	Skills are taught on the below dates so practise on placement can begin after
w/c 09/09/24	Intro to case-based discussion	Hand washing assessment and infection prevention
w/c 16/09/24	Respiratory I	Moving and handling/BLS
w/c 23/09/24	Respiratory II	Introduction to history and examination
w/c 30/09/24	Respiratory III	Vital signs, urinalysis, NEWS, BMI and Resp history
w/c 07/10/234	CVS I	Respiratory examination and cardiac history
w/c 14/10/24	CVS II	Cardiac examination
w/c 21/10/24	CVS III & Derm	Introduction to medicines and therapeutics (inc. sc/im injections and CBG), GI history
w/c 28/10/24	READING WEEK	
w/c 04/11/24	Gastro I	GI examination and Thyroid/Endocrine history
w/c 11/11/24	Gastro II	Thyroid examination and CNS history
w/c 18/11/24	Gastro III	CNS examination and PNS history
w/c 25/11/24	Gastro IIII	PNS examination and MSK history
w/c 02/12/24	Neuro I	MSK1 (GALS)
w/c 09/12/24	Neuro II	MSK2 (shoulder, hip and knee) and men's health history

TERM 2

Suggested placement activities		
03/01/25	The focus should be students performing more consultations under indirect supervision this	Skills overview:
10/01/25		
17/01/25		

24/01/25	<p>term, with a debrief following each of these. (This should be a structured handover which includes SBARR).</p> <p>Students should:</p> <p>Undertake joint/parallel clinics of appropriate patients – supervised by an appropriate health professional.</p> <p>Develop more complex communication and clinical skills.</p> <p>Work alongside Practice Nurses, Phlebotomists and HCAs.</p> <p>Develop competence in patient examination and clinical decision making.</p> <p>Develop an understanding of how to recognise and respond to an acutely unwell patient.</p> <p>Develop an understanding of how to initiate a prescription and the responsibilities of a prescriber.</p>	<p>Intimate examinations, ABPI, fundoscopy, otoscopy and ECG.</p> <p>Venepuncture clinics from the 27th January.</p>
31/01/25		
07/02/25		
14/02/25		
21/02/25		
28/02/25		
BREAK 07/03/25		
14/03/25		
21/03/25		
28/03/25		
04/04/25		
11/04/25		
Assessment:		

Curriculum teaching on campus Term 2:		
	Body system covered	These skills are taught on the below dates so practise on placement can begin after
w/c 06/01/25	Neuro III	Fundoscopy/ Otoscopy and urology history
w/c 13/01/25	Women's/Men's Health I	Breast/ rectal and testicular exam and vascular history
w/c 20/01/25	Women's/Men's Health II	Vascular ABPI and women's health history
w/c 27/01/25	Women's/Men's Health III	Venepuncture and sexual health/contraceptive history

w/c 03/02/25	Mental Health	ECG and ECG interpretation
w/c 10/02/25	Mental Health	Intro to A-E and analysing blood results history
w/c 17/02/25	Women's/Men's Health III	A-E simulation with integrated scenarios
w/c 24/02/25	MSK I	A-E simulation with integrated scenarios
w/c 03/03/25	BREAK	
w/c 10/03/25	MSK II	Medicines administration 2 and integrated scenarios
w/c 17/03/25	MSK III	BLS/ asepsis assessments
w/c 24/03/25	Dermatology	Integrated scenarios I
w/c 31/03/25	Haematology	Integrated scenarios II and Intro to OSCE assessment
w/c 07/04/25	Oncology	Integrated scenarios III/Escape Room

TERM 3

Suggested activities:		
25/04/2025	<p>The focus should be students performing solo consultations (with appropriate patients) with a structured debrief after each one.</p> <p>Students should:</p> <p>Practise running a consultation independently (including history, appropriate examination, differential diagnosis, investigations, and a management plan).</p> <p>Be able to appropriately document a consultation.</p> <p>Consider the inclusion of health promotion and patient education.</p> <p>Be able to review a drug history and understand the indication and rationale behind it.</p> <p>Consider pathways of referral to appropriate agencies.</p>	<p>Consolidate all skills and examinations to the level required for the end of year assessments.</p>
02/05/25		
09/05/25		
16/05/25		
23/05/25		
30/05/25 (Catch up day if needed)		
06/06/25 (Catch up day if needed)		
13/06/25 (Catch up day if needed)		
20/06/25 (Catch up day if needed)		

Assessment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of Progress Form 3 • DOPS (5 as specified in the WBA Guide) • MiniCEX (1 as specified in the WBA Guide) • CBD (2 as specified in the WBA Guide) • 1 x Reflection <p>DEADLINE: 23rd MAY</p> <p>All catch up days should have been completed by 20th June</p>
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Curriculum teaching on campus Term 3:		
	Body system covered	These skills are taught on the below dates so practise on placement can begin after
w/c 21/04/25	Endocrinology	Integrated scenarios III
w/c 28/04/25	Paeds I	Ultrasound and radiology
w/c 05/05/25	Paeds II	Radiology and integrated scenarios
w/c 12/05/25	Poisons	Radiology, enhanced consultation skills I and OSCE “experience.”
w/c 19/05/25	Elderly	Radiology, enhanced consultation skills II and OSCE prep 2
w/c 26/05/25	EXAM	Written Summative Exam
w/c 02/06/25	EXAM	PA1 OSCE
w/c 09/06/25	Ophthalmology	SECO simulation
w/c 16/06/25	All	IV Fluids, Catheter, Cannula, ABG/O ₂ , wound closure

Relevant Contacts

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Email K.cunningham@leeds.ac.uk

Sarah Howarth

Academic Lead for PA Placements, MSc Physician Associate Studies

Email s.d.howarth@leeds.ac.uk

Student Education Service Team

Email pastudies@leeds.ac.uk

Additional resources

Please go [here](#) for additional resources, such as:

- The curriculum map covering both years
- Workplace-based assessments: Expectations of a Year 1 physician associate student
- Advice on contamination incidents & needlesticks
- Professionalism Statement
- PA student drug formulary
- Guidance on PA student supervision, identification, and IT access