

Policy for Admissions to MSc Physician Associate Programme

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| Review | Every year |
| Approval/Adopted: | SRAG – June 2018 |
| Original Distribution of draft for comment: | Head of Admissions (Medicine & Dentistry) Senior Tutors for Admissions Dean for Education and Head of Physician Associate programme Institute Manager of IHSE |
| Related Policies and documents: | 2018 SMD Prospectus Policy for the enrolment of Medical and Dental Students without DBS or Health Clearance |
| For particular attention of: | Student Recruitment and Admissions Manager Senior Tutors for Admissions Head of Admissions (Medicine & Dentistry) Applicants |
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| Replaces: | 2017 Admissions Policy |

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to ensure a fair and transparent process of admission to the MSc Physician Associate programme within the School of Medicine and Dentistry. The policy provides clear procedural guidance to applicants and to staff involved in the administration of the admissions process.
- 1.2 The policy has been written in line with recommendations outlined in the Admissions to Higher Education Review "Fair Admissions to Higher Education: Recommendations for Good Practice" (the Schwartz Report, 2004) and the Medical Schools Council Guiding Principles for the Admission of Medical Students (2004).

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy covers admissions to the MSc Physician Associate programme in the School of Medicine and Dentistry, Queen Mary University of London.
- 2.2 It sets out the involvement of staff in the selection and decision process, the admissions process and the procedures for applicants to appeal or complain.

3. Equality and Diversity Statement

- 3.1 The School of Medicine and Dentistry firmly and actively promotes equality and diversity and is working towards eliminating discrimination against any person because of their religion/ belief, race, age, gender, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, gender.

- 3.2 Applicants with disabilities¹ should seek advice from the Admissions team well before the deadline for direct applications **30th September 2018** so that each case can be given individual attention and consideration. Applicants are advised to seek advice by **3rd August 2018**.
- 3.3 Candidates for the MSc Physician Associate programme need to be able to complete minimum of 1400 hours of clinical placement within various clinical settings in the NHS and in GP practices. Applicants who have declared a disability will receive a letter from the Head of Admissions prior to interview to ensure we can accommodate any specific needs. If you are offered a place on the programme, we will send information regarding the requirement for prior assessment. This will be in the form of a confidential health questionnaire which follows the HEOPS guidance used for medicine and dental programmes. We will also ask you to make contact with our Disability and Dyslexia Service where appropriate. This is so that a discussion of reasonable adjustment or discussion of your assessment of needs report can be made prior to admission.
- 3.4 All staff involved in the Admissions process are aware of their responsibility to implement the University's Policy on Equal Opportunities / Equality and Diversity. Interview Panel Members receive compulsory training in selection with particular emphasis on equal opportunities.

4 Staff Involvement in Recruitment

- 4.1 The Student Recruitment and Admissions Manager is responsible for implementing the Admissions Policy and reports to the Institute Manager, the Head of Admissions (Medicine & Dentistry) and the Admissions and Recruitment Committee (ARC). The Head of Admissions (Medicine & Dentistry) reports to the Dean for Education (Medicine), through him/her, and the Dean for Dentistry.
- 4.2 The ARC is a sub-committee of the School Education Committee (SEC) and has responsibility for the overall decision-making process for all matters relating to student admission, recruitment and marketing for the undergraduate & graduate medical and dental programmes and the MSc Physician Associate. The ARC proposes recruitment targets for the MSc Physician Associate within the School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD), which are agreed by SEC and approved by the SMD Executive Board and thereafter SRAG.
- 4.3 Interview Panel Members, whether lay members, staff or students, shall receive compulsory training in selection and on equal opportunities. The Student Recruitment and Admissions Office is responsible for maintaining a record of all panel members and the dates of their training. Ideally, all members should receive annual training, but they should participate in equal opportunity training a minimum of once every three years.

5 Applications Process

- 5.1 All applications will be made directly to QMUL via the online portal on the university website. The closing date for application for the January 2019 intake is **30th September 2018**.

6 Entry Requirements for MSc Physician Associate

6.1 All applicants for MSc Physician Associate shall be graduates

6.1.1 UK graduates

- All candidates must have a BSc (honours) in a Life Sciences, Biomedical or Health Profession Degree. Their first degree will usually be a bachelor's degree but may be a four-year

Masters, but the latter only if it is a first degree. The minimum academic entry requirements are:

- 1) A second-class honours (2:2 minimum)
 - 2) A- level or equivalent in two science subjects. One science subject should be either Chemistry or Biology (minimum grade C).
- If an applicant is offered a place, he/she must have completed this degree prior to enrolment. Candidates are required to complete their first degree within the prescribed period allowed by their University.
 - A valid, approved English Language qualification is required from applicants educated outside the UK (or educated within the UK but not in the English language medium) who meet our academic criteria:
 - IELTS with a score of at least 7.0 overall, 6.5 in the writing and no less than 5.5 in all other components OR
 - An approved equivalent language test/qualification as detailed on our webpages: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/postgraduate-english-language-requirements/>

6.1.2 Non-UK graduates

- We will consider British Bachelor (Honours) equivalent qualifications gained in other countries. Only an applicant's first degree is considered.
- Applications from candidates who are in the final year of their degree will be considered provided that they are predicted to achieve a minimum of a lower second-class honours (2:2) degree or above. If these applicants are offered a place, they must have completed this degree prior to enrolment. Applications are not accepted from students in the first or second year of their degree.
- A valid, approved English Language qualification is required from applicants whose native language is not English:
 - IELTS with a score of at least 7.0 overall, 6.5 in the writing and no less than 5.5 in all other components OR
 - An approved equivalent language test/qualification as detailed on our webpages: <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/international/international-students/englishlanguage/requirements/postgraduate-english-language-requirements/>

6.1.3 Non-academic entry requirements

- Age requirements: Applications are encouraged from mature students. There is no upper age limit, provided academic entry requirements are satisfied.

7 Selection process and sequence

- 7.1 Applications are firstly reviewed within the Admissions Office to check that they meet the minimum academic requirements. Any applications that do not meet the minimum academic requirements will be rejected at this point. The admissions process follows Values Based Recruitment.
- 7.2 From 2018-19, applicants for MSc Physician Associate will be scored based on a point system by the Admissions Office. Applicants are scored in the following categories: A level Biology or Chemistry, BSc (honours) grades, Postgraduate qualification (MSc/ PhD).

Academic performance scoring:

| Academic performance | Score |
|----------------------|-------|
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|--|---|
| MSc &/or PhD | 4 |
| BSc (Honors) 1st class Honours | 5 |
| BSc (Honors) 2:1 class Honours | 3 |
| BSc (Honors) 2:2 class Honours | 1 |
| A Level or equivalent Biology (A grade) | 3 |
| A Level or equivalent Biology (B grade) | 2 |
| A Level or equivalent Chemistry (A grade) | 3 |
| A Level or equivalent Chemistry (B grade) | 2 |
| A Level or equivalent Biology/ Chemistry (C grade) | 1 |

7.3 We aim to interview up to 80 applicants. It is not possible to predict what values to put on the threshold required for interview, or to use data from previous years to predict subsequent years' thresholds, since it is essentially competitive and depends on who applies. Hence, we cannot make this information public.

8 Personal statement and references

8.1 Personal statements and references are not weighted or scored but provide the Admissions team with evidence that applicants satisfy the main entry requirements.

8.2 Personal statements should provide evidence of commitment and realistic appreciation of, the academic, physical and emotional demands of the MSc Physician Associate programme and working as a Physician Associate.

Applicants may be closely questioned at interview on their personal statement and must ensure that it is an honest reflection of their strengths and interests. Personal statements must be written entirely by the applicants themselves. Personal statements showing evidence of plagiarism may cause the application to be rejected, irrespective of all other achievements.

8.3 In addition to academic ability, selectors will consider interests, talents and the contribution applicants could make to our School. They will also bear in mind the applicant's suitability as a future member of the medical team. Good communication skills and the ability to work as a part of a team are essential strengths for a Physician Associate.

9 Work Experience

9.1 At the interview stage, selectors will determine whether or not applicants have gained experience and understanding from an appropriate amount and type of work experience. It is recognised that direct observation of healthcare may be difficult to arrange but applicants should have some experience of working with the public in a caring or service role. We may check work experience references to ensure what has been reported is correct.

10 MSc Physician Associate Student Selection Process

10.1 Barts and The London Medical School operates an Assessment Centre Process for the Physician Associate programme. The Assessment Centre event takes around half a day and involves the completion of observed tasks including a group-based task, discussion of case scenarios or topical issues, a DVD of a clinician–patient interaction and a structured interview. Candidates will also be assessed on their commitment to, and realistic appreciation of the academic, physical and emotional demands to successfully complete MSc Physician Associate programme. Trained assessors will observe applicants completing tasks score applicants on a set of predetermined criteria.

10.2 The selection centre will run during late October or early November. Given the competition for places to for the MSc Physician Associate at Queen Mary University of London, not all applicants are invited to the assessment centre and no offers will be given without attending the assessment centre process.

- 10.3 The assessment is used to assess the applicant's determination, communication skills, team work skills and personality, and gives applicants a chance to meet the people involved with the programme. To assess awareness of the realities of a career in the Health Sector, candidates are usually asked about their personal experiences gained through work experience or voluntary work.
- 10.4 As in all aspects of the selection process, reasonable adjustments will be made to help an applicant with a disability. Applicants for whom this is relevant are advised to contact the Admissions team before the day of the interview

11 Offers

- 11.1 Decisions are made once all candidates have been seen on completion of the selection centre and are based on performance in the selection centre alone. All offers are conditional on meeting academic requirements and satisfactory health and DBS clearance by the required deadlines. All decisions are confirmed directly with the applicant.
- 11.2 The number of places available for the January 2019 intake in the MSc Physician Associate programme is 60.

12 Other Entry Conditions

12.1 Disclosure & Barring Service (formerly CRB) Clearance

- Applicants who have any convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not protected or do not meet the new filtering rules as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (exceptions) order 1975 (as amended in 2013) should declare them on the application form. The amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account.
- Applicants who have been offered a place will be asked for further information about any criminal convictions or other punishments that they may have disclosed. The consideration of an applicant's criminal record is entirely separate from the selection process for the Physician Associate programme at Barts and The London, to ensure that there can be no bias in the selection process. The requested information will be processed in line with the School of Medicine and Dentistry's Policy on Applicants with Criminal Records.
- All offers are made subject to satisfactory clearance by the DBS. The cost of the checks and registration process must be paid by the applicant. Applicants who fail to meet the deadline for submitting their online DBS applications will be rejected even if they have fulfilled the academic conditions of their offers.
- Applicants in receipt of offers are subject to an ongoing obligation to disclose any criminal convictions or other punishment received since they completed their Direct Application form and up until the point they register for their programme. In such cases, applicants should contact the Student Recruitment and Admissions Office. Failure to do so may result in offers being withdrawn or de-registration from their programme.
- Where the Enhanced DBS disclosure has not been received in time for enrolment, applicants will be asked to sign a full declaration of any criminal record received prior to full enrolment.

12.2 Health Questionnaire

All applicants who are offered places are required to complete a health questionnaire, which will

ask for information about their physical and mental health. All information disclosed is confidential between the applicant and the Occupational Health Service (OHS) but if it impacts significantly on an individual's ability to take on the roles and responsibilities of a Physician Associate could, in very rare cases, result in the withdrawal or non-issue of an offer. Applicants will be asked to disclose whether they have been treated for past illness and the OHS may seek further information on this. Applicants who fail to meet the deadline for submitting their completed health questionnaire will be rejected even if they have fulfilled the academic conditions of their offers.

12.3 Blood-Borne Viruses and other infectious diseases

Students enrolled on the MSc Physician Associate programme are not expected to perform exposure-prone procedures (EPPs) as a routine part of their programme. However should they opt to undertake EPPs as part of a selected study component for example then they must be able to demonstrate that they are not chronically infected with a blood-borne virus: hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) by attending an appointment with the OHS for a blood test.

12.4 Previous enrolment on a clinical programme

Candidates must declare on their application if you have previously enrolled on MSc or PG Diploma in Physician Associate Studies or other clinical course you did not complete and provide information about these circumstances.

13 Feedback

- 13.1 Requests for feedback after interview should be made in writing (by letter or email) to the Student Recruitment and Admissions office. Candidates should clearly indicate their full name and address, Feedback will normally be provided within 20 working days of receipt of the feedback request. Requests must be made directly by the candidate and not a third party. Feedback requests made directly to other members of College staff are likely to be delayed, or may not receive a response. Applicants who are rejected prior to the selection centre are informed directly of the reason of their rejection. On this basis, no further feedback is provided.

14 Appeals and Complaints

- 14.1 Applicants wishing to appeal an admissions decision or make a complaint should refer to the Queen Mary Admissions Appeals and Complaints policy. This can be accessed using the following link:

[http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/media/arcs/policyzone/academic/Admissions-Appeals-and-Complaints-Policy-\(final\)-October-2017.pdf](http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/media/arcs/policyzone/academic/Admissions-Appeals-and-Complaints-Policy-(final)-October-2017.pdf)

15 Plagiarism and Falsified Applications

- 15.1 Queen Mary will withdraw any offers made to applicants who are found to have submitted a personal statement that contains any plagiarised text.
- 15.2 Queen Mary will withdraw any offers made to applicants who are found to have supplied false information or omitted relevant information in their application. If a student registered with Queen Mary is found to have submitted a fraudulent application their registration will be terminated. There will be no refund of tuition fees or deposits for students who are found to have submitted fraudulent applications. There is no statute of limitations on this rule.

16 Data protection

16.1 Please refer to the privacy notice for applicants and <http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/governance/information-governance/data-protection/> for information.

¹ Definition of Disability: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long term means that the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the affected person's life. Cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis are deemed disabilities under the Equality Act 2010 from the point of diagnosis. More information is available on <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/law/disability-key-legislation>